

Julian Critchley
on the madness
of the Tory right

page 15



Cancer cure,
or a new South
Sea Bubble?

The biotech gold rush, Section Two



Pop art and
modern objects
of desire

Andrew Graham-Dixon, Section Two



Chanel gets
fruity with a
new scent

Fashion, Section Two

THE INDEPENDENT

2.991

TUESDAY 21 MAY 1996

WEATHER Cold and unsettled with sun and showers 40p (IR 45p)

The waning of the antibiotic age



Miracle cure: Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin, in his laboratory in London. In 1945 he was awarded a Nobel Prize for his work on the drug

Scientists call for stricter controls as 'cure-all' loses power

GLENDY COOPER

Fifty years ago it was hailed as a miracle drug which saved millions of lives. But misuse of penicillin and other antibiotics has meant that infectious diseases once thought conquered are on the rise again.

Scientists yesterday called for stricter controls over the use of antibiotics as a World Health Organisation report spoke of a "current crisis", with the lifespan of such drugs shortening all the time.

Infectious diseases, the main cause of premature death, kill 17 million people every year. The biggest killers are pneumonia (4.1 million), diarrhoeal diseases (3.1 million) and tuberculosis (3.1 million). All have strains which are now resistant to common antibiotics.

In Britain MRSA has caused severe problems. In 1995 about 130 hospitals reported cases and the previous year 60 people in West Midlands hospitals died after infection.

The resistant organisms that are being produced are a whole new generation of organisms," Ralph Henderson, WHO's assistant director-general, warned. "This resistance problem is one that I think is going to be a major plague for the coming century.

Strains of pneumococci, the most common bacteria causing acute respiratory infections in children, were once uniformly susceptible to penicillin.

Now they are resistant in up to 18 per cent of cases in the United States and 40 per cent in South Africa.

Epidemic dysentery caused by shigella dysenteriae in central and southern Africa now results in the death of up to 15 per cent of those infected, because of resistance to antibiotics.

In South-East Asia, 50 per cent of the strains of salmonella typhi, the bacteria which causes typhoid fever, are already resistant to standard antibiotics.

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In some areas, staphylococci, which can contribute to skin infections, food poisoning and

other serious disorders, have developed resistance to all antibiotics except vancomycin.

The WHO report warns that if vancomycin-resistant strains were to emerge, some of the most prevalent hospital-acquired infections could not be treated.

Infections are most common on intensive-care wards and acute surgical and orthopaedic wards. They range from trivial to life-threatening conditions, such as septicemia (blood poisoning). In the US it is estimated that antibiotic-resistant bacteria are responsible for up to 60 per cent of hospital-acquired infections.

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"In this country we do have antibiotic resistance, but in comparison to the other parts of the world it is a small problem," said a spokeswoman for the Public Health Laboratory Service in North London. "But we have to look at very careful, appropriate usage of antibiotics given out by GPs and in hospitals. Veterinary usage also needs to be looked at."

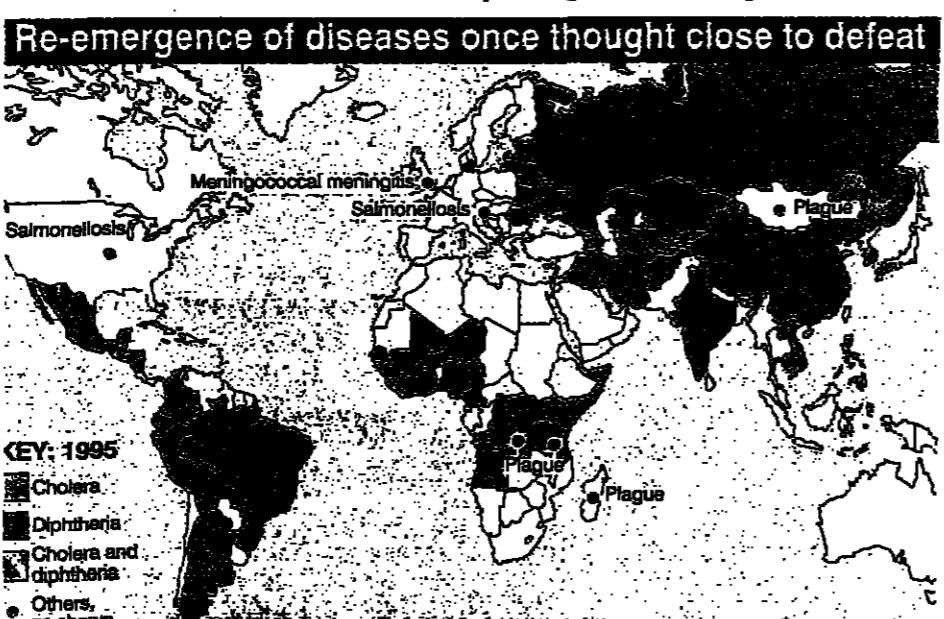
Micro-organisms are now being exposed to "an environment heavily laced with antibiotics for humans," said Mr Henderson. Even more antibiotics are being fed to beef cattle. In many developing countries, antibiotics can be bought on the open market, while some are counterfeit.

Dr Martin Wood, editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy*, called for tighter controls on the way antibiotics are dispensed.

"We need to be sure that doctors and everyone else are rethinking antibiotics. For too long doctors have regarded antibiotics as harmless agents, that it's safe to give them to most people. It may not do any harm to the individual but it's putting more and more pressure on the environment. There's an overload of people just using them like aspirin."

Thirty years ago the US surgeon general said the time had come to "close the book on infectious diseases".

Dr Wood warned yesterday: "Bacteria started breaching the bulwarks over the last 20 years. Now some strains are resistant to all antibiotics. It's just a question of time."



Life is (bitter) sweet as Manchester's bard of bleakness wins the top prize at Cannes

DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

Mike Leigh, once a cult British film-maker for manic depressives and students of urban working-class disintegration, yesterday won over the film glitterati.

The poet of bleak days and rain-sodden gloom won the Palme d'Or at Cannes, one of the least gloomy things that can happen to a film-maker.

The prize, for his latest film *Secrets and Lies*, cements his international reputation for films which include *Life is Sweet* and *Bleak Moments* and completes a period of peaks and troughs

which has seen him win the director's award at Cannes in 1993 for *Naked* and a special achievement award at Bafta.

He spent a week being feted by international film experts and the foreign press but studiously avoided contact with British journalists as he did not want to talk about the collapse of his marriage to the actress Alison Steadman.

Yesterday, Leigh was still cutting a furtive figure greeting his award with the comment: "This is overwhelming. Thank you very much."

Earlier in the day he won the

international critics' award and Brenda Blethyn won the best actress award for her starring role in Leigh's winning film.

Secrets and Lies tells the story of a black Londoner's exploration of her family's past; it stars Marianne Jean-Baptiste and Timothy Spall and will be released in Britain in June.

Leigh's individualistic style involves developing the characters and dialogue with the actors rather than starting from a completed script.

Marianne Jean-Baptiste said: "We rehearsed for about six months, but only in the last

stages did it become clear who I was."

The Manchester-born director does have a penchant for inner-city working class life. But his films combine bleakness with humour and acute observations of family relationships. He balks at the caricature of him as a maker of arthouse films. When he gave evidence to a House of Commons select committee on the film industry, he exploded at a suggestion that there was a clique of British film-makers producing work for each other.

"I resent that suggestion," he said, "... most of us are committed to entertainment."

Daily arts news begins today on page 8



Leigh: Peaks and troughs

Labour swaps private data for computer

Millionaire in £300,000 deal

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

A millionaire businessman has given the Labour Party a £300,000 state-of-the-art computer system in return for being allowed to use and sell-on information stored on it.

Philip Jeffrey, the multi-millionaire entrepreneur who made his fortune from the Fads DIY chain, has set up a business to provide the party's new media centre with the latest computer hardware and software.

In return for this, he will try to sell the information and the expertise his company has gleaned to other commercial organisations and political parties round the world.

Mr Jeffrey's donation was kept under wraps by party officials when they launched their £2m media headquarters earlier this year with the computer system - codenamed Excalibur - as its electronic heart.

Dubbed "Mandelson Tower" by some party activists, the centre, which is modelled on a United States-style presidential race headquarters, will be run by Peter Mandelson, head of the election campaign team.

Until recently, Mr Jeffrey, a Labour supporter, owned the *New Statesman and Society*, the left-wing weekly magazine. The company that owns Excalibur is called New Statesman Database but it has no connection with the magazine, which it has sold to the wealthy Labour MP Geoff Robinson. The company is entirely owned by Mr Jeffrey and as well as him, has two other directors, Pat Coyne and Peter Jones.

Excalibur is the most powerful weapon in Labour's general election armoury. It

enables party workers instantly to rebut claims and accusations from their opponents.

When the Scott report on arms to Iraq was published, all 1,800 pages were scanned into the system in five hours, to make it easier to find the key quotes.

The huge database contains all Labour politicians' recent speeches, statements and poli-

cy of compromising its political reputation.

Rather than buy a system, officials decided to lease one, for free, from a private company. "They said, 'you pay for it to be installed and after the election we will hand it back to you for you to do what you want,'" a businessman close to the negotiations said. The deal is another example of the willingness of Labour under Tony Blair to form close relationships with the business community.

Mr Coyne of New Statesman Database, said Excalibur was intended as "a rebuttal tool". The arrangement, he said, had been structured through a private company, "to keep it separate from Labour Party finances".

Mr Jeffrey, his co-director said, had not yet decided what to do with the system after the general election.

A Labour Party spokesman said Excalibur was "like a giant electronic library". The system was owned by Mr Jeffrey's company but, the spokesman said, "day-to-day management was a matter for the Labour Party".

The spokesman said that Mr Jeffrey was "very keen to ensure a Labour government". New Statesman Database, he added, would retain "a strategic interest" in the project. "Anybody who needs to index a lot of documents would have a commercial interest in it."

The party official stressed, however, that "it is not our intention to sell confidential information about anybody. A lot of the information on the system at the moment is available publicly".

Party sources said that Mr Jeffrey was contacted after a national media group had been approached but declined to become involved - for fear



cy documents. Publicly available material by and about its political opponents, including their speeches and gaffes, is also included. The whole system is linked to the Internet.

Party officials have denied claims that the database will store canvas returns and confidential political views of millions of people.

"We are proud of it, it says a lot about the Labour Party - it is tough, it is professional and it is going to work," Mr Blair said about Excalibur at the centre's opening.

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BEST IN GLASS

CHATEAU POUJEAX

1994 BORDEAUX

1994 CHATEAU POUJEAX

2 news

UN lets Saddam sell oil again

DAVID USBORNE

New York

After months of combative negotiations with the United Nations, Iraq yesterday won its first relief from the trade embargo imposed upon it following Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait nearly six years ago.

Under a preliminary agreement signed at UN headquarters, Iraq is to be allowed to export limited volumes of its crude oil on to the world market, the proceeds of which are to be used exclusively for the purchase of desperately needed food and medicine.

The return of Iraqi crude to the oil markets after so many

years was expected to accelerate a cooling-off of prices, which have been soaring in recent weeks – possibly leading to lower petrol pump prices. Iraq's pipelines could be back in action in as little as a month.

The foundation for the agreement was provided by Resolution 986, adopted by the Security Council more than a year ago with strong support from Britain and the United States. Until yesterday, however, Iraq was objecting to the many conditions that it believed violated its sovereignty.

Under the deal, the UN will have the last word on the sale of oil, on the handling of the cash it generates, and, most par-

ticularly, on how the food and medicine is distributed inside Iraq. In the northern areas populated by Iraq's Kurdish minority, the UN will take direct charge of distribution.

Even so, Iraq's main negotiator, Abdul Amir al-Anbari, described the agreement finally reached as being "perfect". He also sought to cast it as constituting the first chink in the trade embargo. "It is going to be a long journey but we have to take the first step," he said.

UN diplomats emphasised, however, that the deal is seen in isolation, as a measure aimed only at alleviating the worst of the suffering in Iraq, whose economy remains in tatters.

This a humanitarian exception, it is not a lifting of the sanctions. The sanctions regime remains fully in place," Madeline Albright, US ambassador to the UN, insisted.

Ms Albright, whose government played a pivotal role with Britain during the four-month

negotiations to ensure that the conditions of Resolution 986 were not diluted, described the deal as a victory for the "Iraqi people who have been suffering so unjustly under the contorted priorities of Saddam Hussein".

Only when a range of highly sensitive issues between Iraq and the UN are resolved is the Security Council likely to consider a complete lifting of the

trade embargo. Most importantly, Iraq is still under pressure to provide firm proof that it has abandoned all its programmes for the production of weapons of mass destruction and destroyed any weapons in its stockpile.

The UN is also demanding that Iraq compensate Kuwait for damage inflicted upon it during the Gulf war, return all looted property, and provide full disclosure about prisoners of war.

The signing of the memorandum of understanding yesterday by Mr Anbari and the UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, followed several days of suspense. The green light was finally given by Sad-

dam Hussein only yesterday morning, after he had conferred late on Sunday with senior advisers.

Subject to the drawing up of a detailed implementation plan, the deal will allow Iraq to sell up to \$200m of crude oil every six months on a renewable basis.

World prices of crude oil have been declining in recent days, partly in anticipation of the deal with Iraq. Yesterday, oil was selling at just over \$20 a barrel, down from a high of over \$26 six weeks ago. There had been speculation that the US was encouraging the agreement, partly in the hope of reversing a recent surge in American petrol prices.

Labour will abolish grants for 1.6m students in higher education and replace them with loans repayable over 20 years at a saving of £1.5b to the taxpayer under plans to be unveiled today by David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary. The scheme, in the middle of a row over plans to withdraw child benefit for 16-18 year olds in full time education, is likely to provoke an outcry from some Labour supporters, and will be seen as further evidence of the hard cutting edge being applied to Labour policies.

Mr Blunkett will give a commitment that the loans will cover student maintenance, but not tuition fees, as called for by the vice-chancellors. He will commit Labour to spending the additional funds on increasing the proportion going on to college or university from 30 per cent to 40 per cent by the turn of the century.

Mr Blunkett will stress that hard choices will have to be taken to increase the numbers going into higher education, but many of the controversial details will be handed to a review under Sir Ron Dearing. These will include the size of the loans, and the rate at which they should be repaid.

The Dearing review will also consider whether smart cards should be used for individual learning accounts, and proposals that they should be administered by a "learning bank" proposed in the Commission on Social Justice report. Private money could be encouraged by Labour to finance the loans, and invest in capital schemes in universities. *Colin Duxbury*

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

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Police believe a row between bar workers in the Kirkby area of Liverpool is behind the murder of a freelance security adviser, Robert Smith, in a city pub at the weekend. Stephen Cole, 37, from Finsbury Park, died when a mob of around 10 men beat him up with baseball bats, knives and a machete.

Mr Cole, a former Liverpool soccer player, was forced back into an area where he had been having a drink with his wife. He was attacked with a variety of weapons, including baseball bats and CS gas. The gang fled and Mr Cole died at the hospital. He died shortly afterwards.

Mr Cole had been advising licensees about employing security staff and how they should handle customers. Last summer he was shot dead in a suspected murder at Liverpool's Crown Court after he denied trying to shoot Thomas Cross, owner of another Peaky Blinders pub in August 1994.

Detectors are linking Mr Cole's murder to a violent attack on a barman in Kirkby, Merseyside, last week, and they believe it was connected to a dispute between two rival factions among doormen. *Jason Bennett*

A police inspector's 17-year-old son who died with his friend in a car crash had not passed his driving test, general insurance and no licence or MOT test certificate for his car, an inquest heard. Richard Smith, son of 37-year-old Valley police inspector Steve Smith, died instantly with three young friends when his Mini Metro failed to clear a bend and ploughed side on into an oncoming car on the A413 Buckingham bypass in February.

Detectors, 17, Paul Smith, 16, and 17, died at the scene. Another passenger, 17, survived. It was pulled alive from the wreckage. Coroner Rodney Corner

reached no conclusion on verdicts on the victims, who were from the Birmingham area and were students at Milton Keynes College.

Detectors and others were too many people in the car and the driver was blamed by the driver not being able to remember what happened. The inquest at Milton Keynes heard that his mother and father had gone away and that he was at home on his own when he took the car, which he had been given as a present, without their knowledge. *PA*

Detectors, 17, Jon Pertwee, who played the cult television *Doctor Who* for four years during the 1970s and went on to appear as children's character Worzel Gummidge for nearly a decade, has died from a heart attack while on holiday with his wife and friends. He was 76.

Pertwee, whose acting career spanned 60 years and included radio's *The Navy Lark*, was found dead in bed by his German-born second wife Ingoborg. He had no history of health problems and had worked right up until the end of his life.

He was using the holiday in Connecticut to take a break from his popular one man tour of Britain which he was due to resume on Thursday. Ironically his death comes as the cult science fiction series is about to take off again with a feature film length special on Bank Holiday Monday, with Paul McGann as the latest Doctor. *PA*

Cambridge University has banned the use of mobile phones in its main library after complaints about students carrying on conversations while people were trying to study. Deputy librarian Roy Welbourn said signs had now been put up asking users to switch off phones when they came into the building.

"We have had increasing numbers of complaints from readers about conversations in reading rooms and study areas where reasonable quiet is expected," he said. "More and more telephones were ringing and people were actually carrying on conversations."

The corridors of the library were being used more and more like an extended telephone kiosk. This is not a Ludite response – merely a reaction to complaints about people wanting to study in a reasonably quiet atmosphere." *PA*

Thieves broke into historic Southwark Cathedral and stole the bishop's ring and four gold chalices. The items have a face value of £16,000 but are said to be "priceless" to the church. Police believe the items may have been stolen to order.

The thieves broke into the cathedral in south London over Sunday night by smashing a Victorian stained glass window in the north choir aisle. They made their way through the vestry and into the part of the building where the cabinet was in a glass display cabinet.

The cabinet was smashed with a fire extinguisher. No alarms were triggered as the burglars left and the theft was not discovered until yesterday morning.

The chalices were made in the 1950s and have an ornate design. The ring is made of gold and had a gold cross on it. It was made in 1905. Mr Mark Smith, one of the cathedral's vergers, said: "The chalices were used on some occasions. We will be able to manage without them. The thieves do not look very professional to me. The window and cabinet were smashed in and there was quite a mess."

Peter Vicker

The Yorkshire Post's Book of the Year award has been won by *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State* by Nicholas Timmins. The Independent's Public Policy Editor. Described by reviewers as "a masterpiece", "a blockbuster" and "a remarkable tale... remarkably told", it earlier won the Longman/Histori Today Book of the Year. It is published in paperback by Fontana Press at £9.99.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Prince tells farmers to go back to their roots

Tenants are told ancestral methods will preserve the land, writes Louise Jury

The Prince of Wales is urging his tenant farmers to return to the traditional methods of agriculture which were employed by their ancestors.

In a plea to preserve the "infinitely precious resource" of Britain's beautiful countryside, the Prince has told his tenants in the Duchy of Cornwall that the old ways of managing the land may preserve it for the future.

His land stewards and their staff are encouraging tenants of the Duchy's 222 farms to take advantage of schemes which fund practices that are sometimes regarded as old-fashioned.

In *The Duchy Review*, a magazine for tenants, which arrived on their doorsteps yesterday, the Prince wrote about the kind of schemes that he wanted to encourage.

With evident delight, the Prince described how some tenants on Dartmoor have established traditional apple orchards, and how others on the edge of the Wessex Downs were working to save rare downland turf.

While discussing the environmental movement's mantra of "sustainability", the need for decisions to be made today with the impact on future generations in mind, the Prince said this was only a complicated way of saying "we should operate with at least one eye fixed firmly on the long-term".

He took a swipe at the large-scale, mechanistic farming of this "supposedly more advanced age" and said that traditional methods would not have survived so long if they had not been "sustainable".

He said he was encouraged by the number of tenants in the Duchy who are taking advantage of schemes to revert to traditional ways of farming and improve the look of the countryside.

Rex and Clive Hooper, brothers who farm in Mere, Wiltshire, will be entering the Duchy's new Habitat Award for their work on preserving the local habitat.

Pam Hooper, Rex's wife, said the farm looked beautiful when the wild flowers were out and attracting butterflies. "The

Duchy are all for it," she said. Lloyd Lyne, 73, who lives near Truro, Cornwall, worked with conservation volunteers to restore two ponds in his 400 acres and the Prince had paid for old buildings to be repaired with traditional slate.

But his son, Christopher, 37, said the task had not been easy. "We're running a business to make a profit, and at the moment there is very little profit to be made."

Despite the difficulties, Patrick Holden, of the Soil Association, said the Prince's influence was important and contrasted favourably with, for example, the "extremely commercial" attitude towards land which was shown by the Church of England's commissioners.

"I'm absolutely certain he's made a difference. If you did a league table of environmental-friendly landlords, I think the Duchy would be right at the top," Mr Holden said.

Anthony Gibson, who heads the National Farmers' Union (NFU) in the south-west, said the Duchy took a "very responsible attitude", which was broadly welcomed by tenants.

"Sometimes they find it a bit difficult to comply with the environmental requirements that are laid down for them and pay the rent. But they have come to understand their landlord's aspirations and, in many cases, to share them."

Brian McLaughlin, the NFU's head of environment and land use, added that some of the practices which were being encouraged by the Prince were very recent.

The use of "managed field margins" as corridors for wildlife between cultivated fields was not at all traditional.

In concluding his article, the Prince stressed the ancient rather than the modern.

Some aspects of the countryside would change but people ought not to be embarrassed about wanting to protect "timeless things" like rare habitats and rural communities, he said.

"Nor should we forget that the traditions of management which gave them to us will also sustain them for us, and for our children and children's children," he said.

Britain's changing farmland

The length of British hedgerows fell by 23 per cent between 1984 and 1990. Most of this was due to neglect. Ten per cent were removed completely.

□ □ □

The variety of plants in woodlands and upland grasslands decreased between 1984 and 1990.

□ □ □

Just over three-quarters of England's land area is farmed. The remainder is urbanised or is woodland, roads and reservoirs.

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Only 7.5 per cent of England is woodland - one of the lowest proportions in Europe. A greater proportion is covered by villages, towns and cities. Broadleaved woodland is increasing slowly.

□ □ □

Ten per cent of English farmland is now within 22 Environmentally Sensitive Areas, where farmers can obtain grants for traditional farming practices such as maintaining dry stone walls.

□ □ □

In 1973 the average yield per hectare of wheat was 4.37 tons. In 1994 it had risen to 7.35 tons.

□ □ □

In 1973 English farm labourers numbered 320,100. In 1994 there were 191,000.

Green remembered hills: A view over Prince Charles's Duchy land near Tavistock, Devon

Photograph: Marc Hill



Modern methods: A combine harvester at work

Money shapes the face of the countryside

Nicholas Schoon on the prospects of re-establishing traditional agriculture

As in architecture, so in farming. In the Duchy of Cornwall's magazine, Prince Charles declares himself an arch-traditionalist. He venerates the wisdom of our ancestors in the ways of managing the land, and mourns our rapid abandonment of their practices.

"I believe we can still learn from them in this supposedly more advanced age," he writes. "Traditional farming practices are...eminently sustainable, because they would not have survived so long if they were not."

Across huge swathes of our countryside, those traditions have perished in the past 50 years, transforming the landscape in the process. Dry-stone walls have crumbled, hedges lucky enough to escape erosion in the creation of prairie-fields have become gappy and ragged.

Hundreds of square miles of wildlife-rich pasture, heath, marsh and hay meadow have gone under the plough. Surviving woodlands are now full of geriatric trees or overgrown coppice because no one takes wood from them any more.

The Prince wants to turn the clock back at least 40 years. He is doing what he can on the Duchy's 50,000 hectares of farmland, and hopes his 222 tenant farmers will see things his way. But his article offers little in the way of prescriptions for how and why these traditions should be revived nationwide.

The look of the British countryside has always been the result of farmers' need to make a living. And like their ancestors, post-war farmers have sought to make the best possible living by growing as much food as quickly as possible. A combination of rapid technological change and generous crop subsidies have made them abandon traditional methods.

Old ways have become too labour-intensive, obstructive, or irrelevant, just as in most other industries. But only in farm-

ing does our overwhelmingly metropolitan society challenge this abandonment of tradition.

The public appears to want traditional farming with landscapes and wildlife conserved, animals given more freedom, pesticides and industrial fertilisers shunned. But people should not be surprised if farmers resist because those changes would mean a large drop in their living standards.

Given the right incentives, farmers will do what is asked of them. Many hundreds are already receiving grants from the taxpayer to revive traditional practices, but these are still minute compared to their other EU subsidies. And to be fair, there are plenty of farmers who like to maintain hedgerows and plant trees out of a sense of stewardship.

Environmental groups argue that EU subsidies should only be given if farmers make at least some basic undertakings to look after the landscape. So far, they have persuaded neither the Ministry of Agriculture nor the European Commission.

You could, theoretically, compel farmers to restore the landscape but imagine the bureaucracy involved in enforcing rebellious squires to do so. There would have to be regular inspections to ensure that hedges and ponds were properly maintained and trees planted.

One should not be bound by tradition. If we are going to pay farmers for their contribution to the appearance of the countryside, then it can be almost any kind of landscape we want.

Why should we not have one or two huge, wilderness forests which it takes more than a day to cross on foot? After all, that is what almost the entire countryside looked like 9,000 years ago, and they still have them in the United States. We could even reintroduce wolves, and give traditional fairy tales fresh meaning.

WPC loses harassment case

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

A woman police officer who alleged she had been subjected to months of sexual harassment by three male colleagues wept as her claims were rejected by an industrial tribunal yesterday.

PC Karen Wade, 26, had claimed she had been "humiliated and victimised" by PC Dean Mountain and Sergeants Paul Fountain and Ian Devey, of West Yorkshire police. Among the allegations, which were dismissed, was that one officer suggested she should have sex with a glue sniffer in the back of a police van.

The tribunal at Leeds unanimously found that Sgt Fountain

30, did not discriminate against his colleague. In the case of PC Mountain, 30 and Sgt Devey, 32 the panel decided, by a majority, there was no discrimination.

After the judgment the male officers made a short statement through their solicitor, Hilary McLaughlin. "Since August 1995 these officers have been subjected to both an internal and external investigation," Mrs McLaughlin said. "The investigation in 1995 found nothing against these officers. The applicant then sought to bring these allegations into the forum of an industrial tribunal. Again, they have been exonerated."

Ms Wade said after the ruling: "By taking my case to an industrial tribunal and as a result of the vast media attention the case has received, I believe I have given strength to a number of others."

Welfare workers said yester-

day that most allegations of sex

discrimination failed to reach an

industrial tribunal.

Most women chose to "grin and bear" it or were advised to keep quiet in case they blighted their careers.

The bitterness of many pol-

ice women was voiced by Sgt Jane McGill, 43, who spoke in support of PC Wade. She told the tribunal: "To be a woman in the police force until recent times has been difficult. I, for my part, have survived that experience for more than a quar-

ter of a century because for a

major part of that time I chose

to go along with it."

Despite yesterday's judgment, there has been evidence as recently as February that sexism and racism are still a problem in the police service.

A study of 13 forces by HM

Inspectorate of Constabulary,

while acknowledging that "substantial" progress had been made since its last report in 1992, concluded that a male

"canteen culture" was prevalent

and "there was evidence of

continuing high levels of sexist

and racist banter, perhaps more

covert and subtle than before,

but no less destructive".

Women account for about 14

per cent of the 124,000 police

officers in England and Wales.

Nolan 'should investigate Tory funding'

Labour last night demanded that the Prime Minister should allow the Nolan Commission to look into allegations of "secret and suspect" funding of the Conservative Party by the fugitive tycoon Asil Nadir.

The move came after the Tories were also accused of receiving £100,000 from a Serbian businessman linked to the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

The claims resulted in the Conservative Party chairman, Dr Brian Mawhinney, ordering an immediate internal inquiry into the allegations - which have been strongly denied by the unnamed businessman through his lawyers.

The Labour deputy leader John Prescott said the case for the Tories to open up their party's books to public scrutiny was now "unanswerable" and Lord Nolan should be allowed to mount a full investigation.

A Commons motion sponsored by Labour's Andrew MacKillop, MP for Thurrock, piled on the pressure, adding: "Any failure to open the books or to allow proper examination will be inevitably seen as confirmation that the Conservative Party has something serious to hide."

But Downing Street sources rejected the calls, insisting: "It is not in Lord Nolan's remit to investigate these allegations. There has already been a Home Affairs Select Committee report

on the issue." The former Conservative Party treasurer Lord McAlpine entered the row, calling for the money donated by former Polly Peck chief

Nadir to be handed back.

Lord McAlpine, who was party treasurer when Nadir made his £400,000 donation, said it now appeared the money was "dubious" and should be returned to the receivers of Nadir's failed business empire.

Accountants Touche Ross were reported to have advised Conservative Central Office secretly three years ago that £363,000 of the money given by Nadir had been stolen from Polly Peck.

Lord McAlpine told BBC Radio 4's *World at One* programme: "At the time we took the donation from Asil Nadir, he was regarded as one of Britain's leading businessmen."

"It seems as if the money that we took was dubious. Personally, I would have given it back."

Insisting the Tories must now open their books, Mr Prescott said: "As things stand, a multi-million pound Tory campaign is being funded from secret sources."

"We have no idea what promises the Tories have given to foreign donors in return for the money. Such a situation is a constitutional outrage. The time has come for John Major to reverse his previous decision to deny Nolan the opportunity to investigate party funding."



Inter
rent

4 politics

Dorrell sets out stall for Tory leadership bid

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Stephen Dorrell projected himself as a potential unifier of the Conservative Party last night when he donned the mantle of Thatcherism to argue that modern Tories rather than new Labour were the true "one nation" force in British politics.

The Secretary of State for Health sought to reach out beyond his natural base on the party's pro-European left with a speech lauding Baroness Thatcher and calling for Tories to enlarge "the scope of personal responsibility" and reinforce "the ties of nationhood".

His speech to the Tory Reform Group, usually regarded as a bastion of the Conservative left, is certain to be seen by MPs as yet another sign that several ministers are subtly repositioning themselves with an eye to a post-general election leadership contest.

Mr Dorrell combined an attempt to decouple the term "one nation" from its Tory left connotations with language which was strikingly right of centre on the need to curb social security spending and to stand up for Britain as a nation state within Europe.

Ignoring Lady Thatcher's gibe at "no-nation Conservatives" in January, Mr Dorrell ended his speech: "Why Lady Thatcher is a one nation Tory."

Much of it was taken up with a closely argued attack on Tony Blair for claiming Labour as the natural "one-nation" party. Mr Dorrell said that Mr Blair "sounds hollow when he talks of insecurity felt by many people in the face of changes they have faced in recent years".

He said that while it was true that "many people had been disoriented by the pace of change in recent years" it was not possible to offer "an escape from the uncertainties of life".

Mr Dorrell went on to say that insecurity was indeed a "key question in modern politics" and one the Tories were uniquely qualified to answer. He argued that personal responsibility – fostered by lower taxes and higher ownership, financial stability and law and order were all key elements in ensuring individual security.

He drew a distinction between health and education – accepted as "universal services which serve the needs of the great majority of the population" – and the welfare state, which was "primarily designed

to offer a safety net to those who are unable to provide for themselves".

Mr Dorrell said that the principle of universality in benefits was "not simply expensive – it is also impossible to reconcile its widespread application with the Tory commitment to enlarge personal responsibility". There were "uncomfortable questions" such as "How do we support those who cannot cope without increasing the numbers of those who choose not to cope? How do we reconcile support to the individual rejected by their own family without undermining family responsibility?"

Europe, Mr Dorrell struck a sharply sceptical note, calling on the European Union to "re-examine the structures which have grown up in the last four decades" and declaring: "For a Conservative, Europe *a la carte* is not a derogation from a principle; it is an assertion of the principle of nationhood."

He added: "One Nation is not simply a sound bite available to be licensed to any passing minstrel... Still less is it the voice of faction – a phrase to distinguish one Conservative from another."



Handy platform: The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, talking to schoolboys at Newcastle railway station yesterday as he arrived to review security for the Euro 96 football championships, to be held in June. Photograph: Reuven Dixon

1 OLIVER-THIS STUFF HAS TO GO TO RILEY'S IMMEDIATELY.

2 LATER... RILEY'S HAVEN'T GOT THAT STUFF YET. WHAT'S HAPPENING?

3 I DON'T KNOW – IT SHOULD BE THERE. I PUT IT ON A BIKE THREE HOURS AGO.

4 BORN TO BE WI-1-1-1-LD!

5 MR RILEY ? I CAN'T APOLOGISE ENOUGH ABOUT THIS UNFORTUNATE DELAY.

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Ashdown savages 'racist' Tories

JOHN RENTOU
Political Correspondent

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, yesterday accused the Conservatives of "pandering to racism and xenophobia" in a strong assertion of his party's liberal credentials.

Developing his strategy of attacking the Tory Government while marking out territory distinct from Tony Blair's New Labour Party, Mr Ashdown laid claim to the "true patriotism" of tolerance and international co-operation.

He told his party's parliamentary candidates at Westminster last night that the Tories were "abusing patriotism in a desperate attempt to cling on to power, but it is a false patriotism".

He attacked the growing questioning of Britain's membership of the European Union in the "Tory party". It is now the voices of isolationism, even of a petty xenophobic nationalism, that are the loudest ones we hear," he said.

"We are told that all this unpleasant hysteria is about patriotism, that it is all about standing up for Britain. Nothing could be further from the truth."

He said: "Britain's greatness has not come from looking inward, from retreating behind island walls or shooting insults at foreigners. It has come from going out, making things happen, building empires, interacting with other cultures".

He went on: "English, as a language, did not flower through mean Anglo-Saxon monosyllables, tailored for the front page of the tabloids. It flowered from the words of Milton and Shakespeare, which drew so richly on the classics and on the treasury of European tongues."

Mr Ashdown laid down a challenge to Labour by positioning the Liberal Democrats as the most libertarian party on race and immigration.

He then attacked Michael Howard. "A true patriot would be repelled by a Home Secretary pandering to racism, xenophobia and intolerance," he said.

He said a true patriot would oppose the Asylum and Immigration Bill, which Mr Blair and Jack Straw, Labour's home affairs spokesman, have made clear they will not vote against.

"A true patriot would condemn out of hand this tawdry affront to our centuries-old tradition of tolerant welcome for the persecuted – Dutch Protestants, French Huguenots, Jews from all over Europe, and many, many others," he said.

His speech follows the challenge last week from Alex Carlile, Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, to Mr Straw, after Labour failed to support his amendments to the Bill in the House of Lords.

"Whose side are you on, Jack?" Mr Ashdown declared: "It is time for all true patriots to argue with passion again for the traditional values of decency and tolerance at home, for reform in our rotten politics, for constructive co-operation abroad."

Labour targets 10-year-olds in crime initiative

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Children aged 10 could face court action under tough measures unveiled by Labour yesterday to combat crime by young people and seize the initiative on law and order from the Tories.

Jack Straw, the shadow Home Secretary, said children aged between 10 and 13 were "plainly capable of differentiating between right and wrong".

Labour will abolish the rules under which young people under 14 are protected by the rule of *delict incapax* – "incapable of evil".

The system of repeated police cautions would be replaced with a final caution with the threat of court action, if conditions were breached. Courts will be given the option of naming offenders aged 16 or over.

Police leaders last night welcomed the measures. "This is a feature of the criminal justice system that has caused untold misery for years. Both the police and public have been frustrated at society's inability to prevent 'bad' behaviour by youngsters," said Brian Mackenzie, the president of the Police Superintendents Association of England and Wales.

"This lack of discipline is recognised by youngsters, who are not slow to take advantage of the system.

"I think Jack Straw's paper represents a realistic attempt to tackle the blight of juvenile crime and unacceptable behaviour by youngsters.

Teachers, police officers and others in authority should be empowered to deal with juvenile anti-social behaviour quickly, in the knowledge that they have the full support of the community and the criminal justice system. A return to such standards and values is to be welcomed and is in the best interests of everyone."

Ann Widdecombe, Minister of State at the Home Office, dismissed Labour's proposals. "It is not even re-inventing the wheel, it is simply re-describing it. It is taking a series of measures we have already introduced. It is calling each one of them by another name and saying 'Here's a package to tackle youth crime'."

The overall thrust of the policy paper, *Tackling Youth Crime, Reforming Youth Justice*, was privately seen by senior Tory Party sources as a successful attempt to outflank Michael Howard, the Home Secretary.

"It is getting hard to keep up with their shifts of policy. They are getting more authoritarian than we are," said one Tory source.

Virginia Bottomley, usually so gushing at Question Time over the wonders of the National Lottery, was strangely reticent yesterday when pressed over the troubles besetting the proposed Millennium Exhibition at Greenwich, south-east London.

The Secretary of State for National Heritage told MPs that the Lottery enabled Britain to fund a celebration which so far exceeded any planned by other countries. But she gave no assurance that the £400m show would go on at Greenwich and even acknowledged the "great advantages" of the rival Birmingham area.

Last week the *Independent* disclosed that big business was reluctant to provide the £200m of sponsorship required if the project is to go ahead. The Millennium Commission, chaired by Mrs Bottomley, met last Friday and gave its funding to Sir Peter Levene, until the end of June to come up with the first business plan sought by potential backers.

Jack Cunningham, the shadow Heritage Secretary, asked Mrs Bottomley for an update on just how much private sector funding had been raised for investment in the exhibition. "Has more time been allocated to the fundraising process?" Mr Cunningham asked. "Has

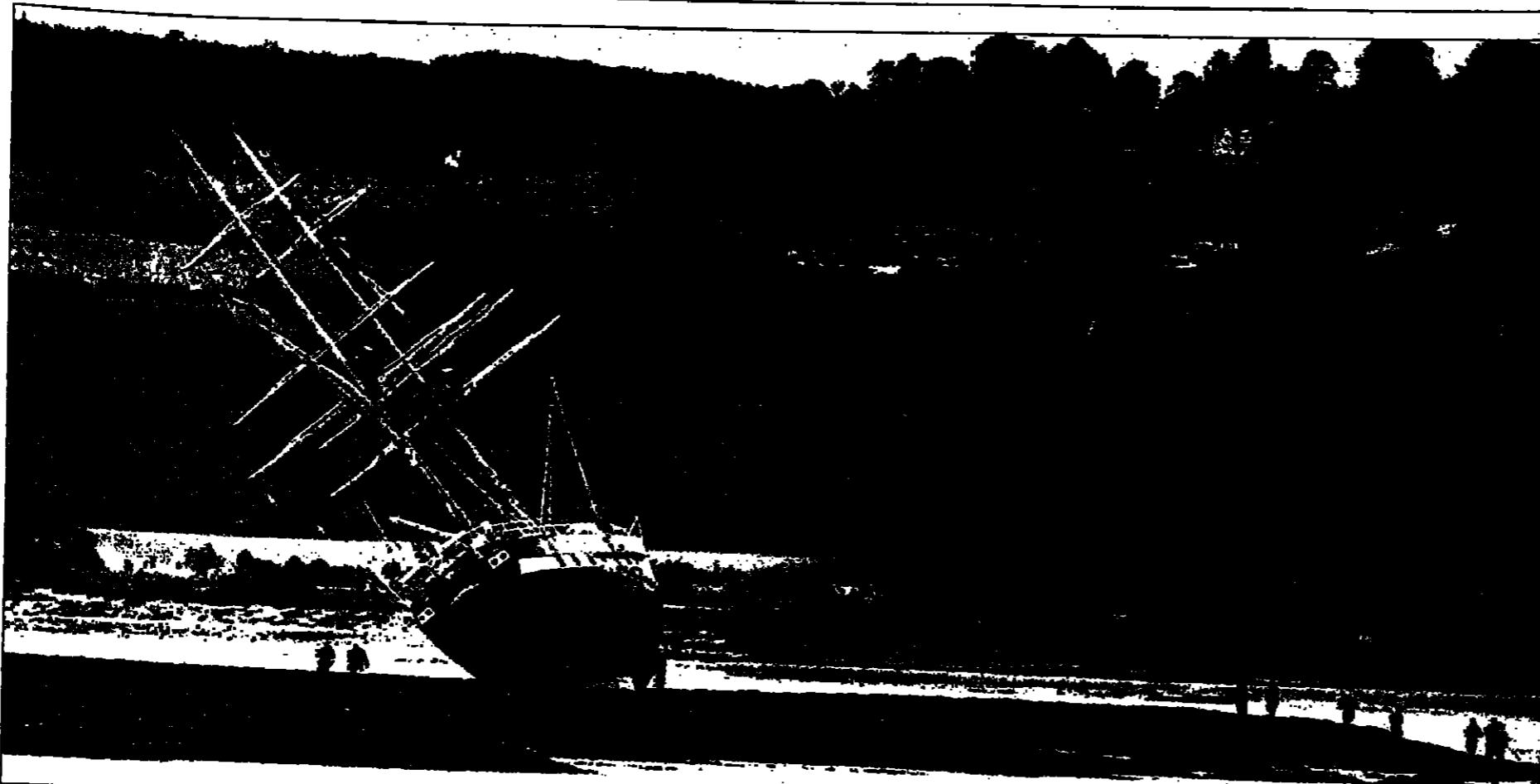
the Government agreed to underwrite the whole project as some press reports have indicated, and, if so, will it be coming from her department or the Treasury?"

But Mrs Bottomley said she was not able to give full information about the discussions under way, "many of which are, of course, confidential".

She confirmed that Sir Peter Shadwell had asked "urgently to do more work to take forward the encouraging early commitments and understandings that have been reached". It was a complex but exciting proposal, Mrs Bottomley said. "It will provide the nation with an opportunity to celebrate the new millennium in one place and provide a lasting legacy in the form of a very significant regeneration of an underdeveloped but exciting part of London."

Robert Maclean, for the Liberal Democrats, took issue with the commission's condition

Jail
cris
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High and dry: The *Royalist* aground yesterday in the Severn after being caught on a falling tide. The cadets were taken off by helicopter and lifeboat. Photograph: SWNS

Cadets taken off stranded ship

Twenty sea cadets were yesterday safely evacuated from a sail training vessel that ran aground in the River Severn.

An RAF helicopter and inshore lifeboat took the trainees off the 110-ton *Royalist* after it became stranded on a falling tide.

The ship's master, a pilot and 12 crew were staying on board and planned to try to refloat the vessel on last night's high tide.

"A tug and rescue service were remaining on stand-by until the 100-ft brigantine was out of danger. The weather was described as good.

A rescue was launched when the *Royalist* got into trouble in the estuary, three miles north of the Severn Bridge and near Oldbury power station.

Reports said the vessel was listing more than 30 degrees as it was left aground.

A Sea King helicopter from RAF Chivenor, north Devon, and lifeboats from Sharpness and Chepstow were later brought in to take off the crew, who were landed ashore at

Beachley Slip, on the Welsh side of the estuary and Sheepbridge, Avon.

No injuries were reported.

Mike Osborne, the district controller of the Swansea Coastguard, which was coordinating the rescue, said it was not clear why the *Royalist* had gone aground.

"Our prime aim is to ensure the safety of all of those on board and for this reason we began moving the crew," Mr Osborne said.

The *Royalist*, which was registered at HMS *Dolphin* in Gosport, Hants, was built in 1971 and travels mainly around Britain as a training vessel for sea-cadet training.

The brig had just left Gloucester docks after a visit to the local Sea Cadet Corps at the weekend.

The 100-ft ship was built for the sea cadets and is crewed by their instructors. It was open to the public in Gloucester docks. Britain's most inland port, on Saturday, when cadets in full dress uniform took visitors on guided tours of the vessel.

Jails face crisis as prisoner levels rise

ROS WYNNE-JONES and JASON BENNETTO

The Prison Service is facing a fresh crisis as the number of new inmates spirals out of control with an extra 600-700 offenders being locked up each month at a cost of more than £1m, it emerged yesterday.

The unexpected rise - the Home Office had predicted an increase of around an extra 150 a month - could cause the total population to leap to 57,000 by the end of the year, way ahead of the original projection of 53,200.

Richard Tilt, the new director-general of the Prison Service, disclosed the new figures yesterday and warned that the rise this year had taken place even before the effects of the plans by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, to introduce tough new sentences.

Mr Tilt also revealed that the service was involved in talks with the Home Office in an attempt to get additional funding for the extra inmates.

"We shall need additional funding - we can't provide additional accommodation out of our existing budget," he warned. If the prison population continued to increase unchecked, the Prison Service could face a funding shortfall of tens of millions of pounds, he said.

The news followed warnings from probation workers and prison officers that the system could not cope with a rising number of inmates at a time when the budget was being cut by 13 per cent. Furthermore, 3,500 prison officers have applied for voluntary redundancy offered as a result of cutbacks in the service. It costs the service more than £24,000 per year to keep each prisoner.

Mr Tilt said: "By Easter, when we would normally have expected to see a drop in the prison population, we had 53,500 prisoners. This has now risen to 54,500." This figure

surpassed the Prison Service's projections for the jail population at the turn of the century.

Mr Tilt added: "We are experiencing much more immediate population problems than those which may come as a result of the White Paper [on sentencing]."

Mr Howard proposes introducing minimum sentences for repeat burglars and drug dealers. He also plans that automatic life sentences should be given to second-time offenders convicted of serious violent crimes and the abolition of automatic early release.

Mr Tilt said that contingency plans were being introduced, including bringing disused Victorian prison wings back into use and erecting prefabricated housing blocks on prison sites. This would take about 12 months, however, whereas the problem was immediate.

"We are experiencing the highest ever British prison population," Mr Tilt said.

He said that he believed the trend was due to Crown Courts around the country passing more custodial sentences than in the past and giving slightly longer sentences.

Harry Fletcher, of the National Association of Probation Officers, said: "The trade unions having been saying for months the figures do not add up. The Prison Service clearly is in a crisis and unless massive amounts of money are found quickly the prisons will become ungovernable."

David Roddan, general secretary of the Prison Governors' Association, agreed with Mr Tilt's assessment that the political climate was affecting the prison population.

He said: "The Home Secretary's previous protestations that he doesn't influence the rise in the prison population, that it is simply a matter for the courts, is disproved. There has not been a rise in indictable offences that can explain a huge rise in the prison population."

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Aptitude tests in technology for 11-year-olds

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

New tests in technological ability for 11-year-olds could help the Government's business-sponsored technology colleges to select their pupils in future.

The tests, commissioned by ministers, may be based on selection procedures used by the Air Force to pick potential pilots and navigators. Officials from the City Technology Colleges Trust have already visited RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire, where the selection takes place, to look at the interactive computer exams used there.

Under the new tests, children would be assessed on skills such as hand-eye co-ordination and spatial awareness. Their results could determine whether they are allowed to enter one of the country's 196 specialist state schools and colleges.

A research project to develop the new exams was launched yesterday by Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education, as she announced 38 new technology and language colleges. It will initially work on tests for technological aptitude but could be extended to other subjects such as languages.

Mrs Shephard said the project was designed not to assess knowledge or skills but aptitude.

Children who had never studied a foreign language would be able to take such a test as easily as one who had, she said, and the exam could prove useful to over-subscribed schools.

"This is to make sure that schools have all the tools they need available to them to make such a selection if that's what they require."

Existing tests developed by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), which will carry out the research, require children to solve puzzles and fit shapes into spaces. The new variety might also include an interactive computer.

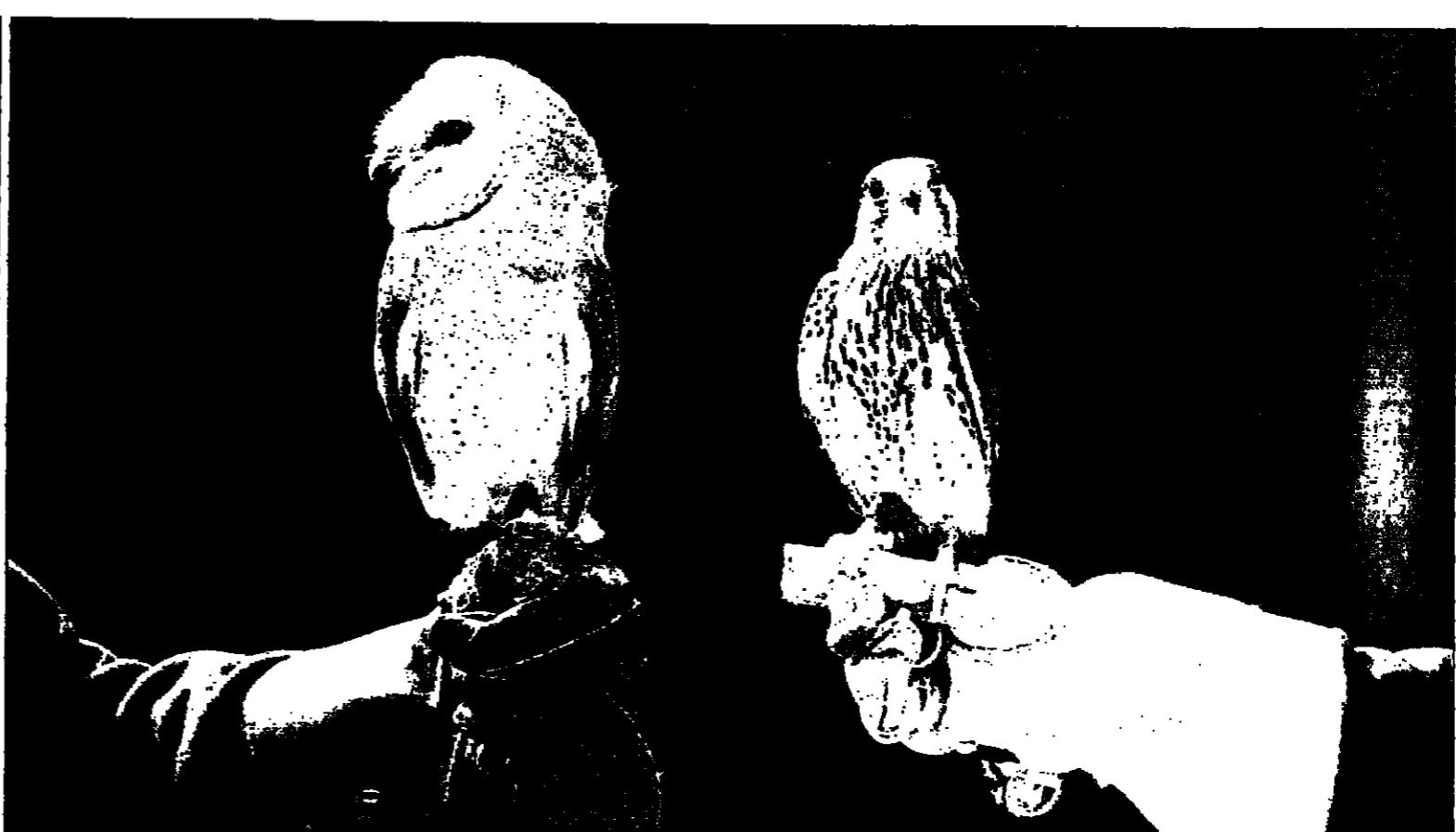
Opinion among headteachers invited to yesterday's press conference was divided. Frank Green, principal of the Lincoln School of Science and Technology, a grant-maintained school supported by 50 companies, said he would be interested in using the tests. His school already used the NFER tests with 12- and 14-year-olds to monitor progress and was considering using them as a selection tool for 11-year-olds.

Hazel Farrow, principal of Loxford Technology College in Redbridge, east London, said she would not use them. "In terms of the future of the country, it is the average child who needs to have these skills. I think

those with aptitude will gain them anyway. I want to increase those skills in the population in general," she said.

Yesterday's announcement brings the number of language colleges to 30, technology colleges to 151 and City Technology Colleges to 15. Business sponsors have now contributed £60m in just under 10 years.

To take part in the programme, schools must raise £100,000 in sponsorship. There were 117 applications for 38 places in the latest tranche of new colleges. Among the successful ones was one of the country's top grammar schools, the Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe, which will become a language college.



Bird in the hand: A barn owl (left) and a kestrel take a bow for the launch at Bristol Zoo Gardens yesterday of Operation Raptor Link, a conservation project by the Hawk and Owl Trust to help threatened birds of prey in the South-west

Photograph: Rob Strutton

School vouchers urged for pupils from 5 to 16

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

All parents of children aged between five and 16 should be given vouchers to spend in a privatised school system, a leading academic said yesterday.

Vouchers are being piloted by the Government for under-16s' education and are being considered for post-16-year-olds. However, Lord Skidelsky, chairman of the Social Market Foundation, said the idea should be extended to pupils of compulsory school age.

Lord Skidelsky, a former government education adviser, said: "I would give all state schools the status of legally independent corporations, able to charge fees, just like universities. This would abolish at one stroke the legal distinction between state and private education, the class divide which is unique to this country."

Speaking at a conference in London organised by Politeia, a right-wing think tank, he proposed that vouchers should be means tested "with higher income parents getting less and lower income parents more: that is an earmarked tax deduction for the former and a tax credit for the latter".

The value of the voucher would be set at the current cost of educating a state school pupil. However, Lord Skidelsky envisaged that many pupils' fees would be paid by charities, businesses and schools themselves. "We ought to think of ed-

ucation as a good produced in response to market demand. There are no characteristics of education which require it to be produced by the state."

The role of government would be limited to fixing the years of compulsory school age, drawing up health and safety rules, licensing exam boards, providing statistics on tests and establishing local education information offices.

Lord Skidelsky, a professor of education at Warwick University, said he had every confidence that vouchers would not only give parents more control over school choices but would also raise standards.

Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, told the conference that caution was needed over the introduction of vouchers. "We should not be driven down the voucher road by despair about the failure of the present educational reforms to work. They are making a considerable difference for the better already."

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said the country should be concentrating on what happened in the classroom and not on the structure of schooling.

Nursery vouchers for the parents of all four-year-olds will be available from next April but ministers have said they have no plans to introduce vouchers for pupils of compulsory school age.

DAILY POEM

Who Goes There?

By Fergus Allen

Painted with clots of ochre, black and pipeclay,
The face on my shield is meant to confuse –
The bramby eyebrows, waterfall moustache
And the eyes, dry but with diamond highlights.
Seeming to mesmerise and accuse.

Behind it (the Romans called it a scutum)
I stand with pole-axe and misericorde,
Narrow blade ready for the coup de grace,
At least in theory. On the qui vive, of course,
But far less likely to be stabbed than bored.

What I can see of your shield enchants me
When I peer out to check on no-man's land –
The full-length image, almost three-dimensional,
The ogre curve of your mulberry tip,
The kiss-curl, the language of the hand.

Congratulations on hiding the hatchet
Deep in the folds of your fitchu, not revealed
Before the body search, in this unlike
Your dog or talbot or whatever you call
That thing with fangs, which does not bear a shield.

Fergus Allen, whose second collection – of which this is the title poem – was published yesterday by Faber, came late to poetry. He was born in 1921 in London and passed much of his career in the civil service, moving to the Cabinet Office in 1965, and subsequently becoming First Civil Service Commissioner. His first collection, *The Brown Parrots of Provincia*, was published to glowing reviews two years ago. Anthony Thwaite commented on poems of such "dash and vigour and sense of action I could hardly believe this was a first collection."

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arts news

edited by David Lister

DAVID LISTER
and RUSSELL NEWMARK

One of the longest-delayed librettos in history, a rock opera which burst into the singles charts in 1967, will be finally released next month almost 30 years after its first "aria" was championed on Radio 1.

In the summer of 1967 a singer called Keith West had the surprise hit of the year with

"Excerpt From A Teenage Opera", a whimsical story about the death of a popular neighbourhood grocer.

Lavishly orchestrated and somewhat outlandishly topped with a children's choir singing "Grocer Jack, Grocer Jack, get off your back," it became one of the classic sounds of the Sixties, and is still played endlessly.

But the promised teenage

opera, in which the tale of Grocer Jack was to be just a part, failed to materialise. Keith West disappeared into musical obscurity.

Now, 29 years later, West's collaborator, an American musician, Mark Wirtz, has completed the score, and it will be released by the RPM Records label. RPM's director, Mark Stratford, the executive producer of the record, said:

"Teenage Opera is a long lost Sixties dream project.

"We've just had a resurgence of interest in *Tommy*, the first pop-rock opera produced and yet *Teenage Opera*, if finished, would have pre-dated it by two years."

West, 51, who lives in Weybridge, Surrey, said: "I can't believe it. It was just done as a bit of fun 30 years ago.

"I thought you made a record

and people tossed it away after six weeks.

"It was just full of the ideas of the time. That was the Sixties – you could just try things and go for broke. It was meant to be tongue-in-cheek and we just decided to go overboard with it."

West is now a marketing director for the Burns guitar company. "I've been offered a lot of money to record a new

version of the song, but I've always declined that," he said.

Royalties from the song, which is still played on radio in Britain and the United States, continue to form an integral part of his income, he says.

In the Sixties, Cliff Richard expressed an interest in performing in the opera if ever produced.

And one of West and Wirtz's

collaborators on the project

promoters sold tickets without planning permission. Villagers are also nervous about the prospect of 80,000 Oasis fans converging on the area for the shows, on 3 and 4 August.

Although all the tickets for the Loch Lomond concert were sold within hours when they went on sale last weekend, the deadline for objections to the gig does not expire until tomorrow.

After five years of neglect the house which 'starred' in Jane Austen film could be bought by quango



Faded grandeur: Chandos House in central London was used in *Sense and Sensibility* (above), but now has dry rot

Main photograph: Edward Sykes

Heritage sees the Sense of purchase

MARIANNE MACDONALD

The owners of the 18th-century London mansion used in the film of *Sense and Sensibility* may be forced to sell following accusations of "disgraceful neglect" by English Heritage.

In a highly unusual move, the quango announced yesterday that it had started proceedings for the compulsory purchase of Chandos House, built by Robert Adam in 1770 off Portland Place, central London.

Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage, said: "We have taken this exceptional measure because we are not prepared to see this outstanding building suffer any longer from disgraceful neglect."

It is only the second time

English Heritage has issued such an order, and follows the failure of Fairgate Investments, the building's owner, to comply with a repairs order to what is one of London's finest town houses.

However, the property company – chaired by a Nigerian chieftain, Chief Akindele – immediately announced that it had started a programme of repairs to make the Grade I-listed house "wind and watertight".

Its move follows years of neglect of Chandos House, which Fairgate Investments bought for £6m in 1988, at the height of the property boom.

The company obtained

permission to turn the house, which featured as John and Fanny Dashwood's town house in *Sense and Sensibility*, into a luxury hotel. But investment was not forthcoming, and for the past five years Chandos House has lain empty, an expensive white elephant.

Meanwhile the interior has deteriorated to the point where

extensive dry rot threatens to spread into the finely decorated principal rooms. Cracks on the wall suggest structural damage, and in April last year thieves stole four Adam fireplaces from the house.

Last February English Heritage was so concerned by the dilapidation of the house that

it gave Fairgate two months to carry out the £90,000 repairs to the roof, dry rot and cracked walls.

Nothing was done until yesterday, when Michael Simmons, Fairgate's solicitor, said that scaffolding was going up on the house and that work would begin right away.

If the work is done to English Heritage's satisfaction, it will avert a crisis which could have resulted in the forced sale of the mansion at a price suggested by an independent assessor.

Chandos House was built for the third Duke of Chandos, and between 1815 and 1871 was used as the embassy for the

Austro-Hungarian empire, notably lavish parties by Prince Esterhazy, the ambassador. It was last used as a headquarters for the Royal Medical Association.

Fairgate Investments, meanwhile, is suing a security company for £1.5m following the theft of the four fireplaces.

Cuts for 'cultural diplomats'

MICHAEL CHURCH

It promotes British culture around the world – teaching English to Brazilians, performing Shakespeare for Egyptians, playing cricket with Turks and showing *Mike Leigh* films to Greek Cypriots.

But while the British Council's work is not in dispute, its already stretched funding is under renewed threat from Government spending cuts.

Sir John Hanson, the Council's director, has been told to expect a 16 per cent reduction in its grant. He has threatened to scale down activities in nearly 20 countries and pull out of 14 altogether if the situation worsens. Not only has the Council's grant – currently standing at £131.9m – not kept pace with inflation, but it also had to cover a massive redun-

dancy programme imposed by the Government.

"I think the figure of 16 per cent was plucked out of the air," said Sir John. "They had given no thought to the consequences, which we have had to spell out. We have a huge profile abroad, but a very small one in Britain, which makes us potentially easy to ignore."

Indeed, abroad, its activities are less easy to ignore. Har-

bouring thousands of students working for British qualifications, the Council in Thessaloniki operates like a further education college. The Cairo office exudes imperial grandeur, but its library is crammed with locals consulting English exam syllabuses.

In Cyprus, the British Council's offices literally straddle the Green Line separating the warring groups. It exerts a key

influence. At its quirkiest, this means bringing *Mike Leigh's Naked* to a film festival on the Greek side, and providing bats, balls, and cricket stumps for *Antigone* Turks. At its most serious, it means a unique attempt to bridge the political gap, by sending student high-fliers from the Greek and Turkish communities to study together in Britain.

In Recife, Brazil, last week, there was a whiff of what cuts mean in practice. David Spiller, the British Council's director for north-east Brazil, had just completed his responses to last year's round of cuts. With nine full-timers serving an area as big as Europe, no one could argue there was any fat to lose. But jobs had been lost, and so had the arts budget.

English teaching is Spiller's best hope of staying solvent: his influence. At its quirkiest, this means bringing *Mike Leigh's Naked* to a film festival on the Greek side, and providing bats, balls, and cricket stumps for *Antigone* Turks. At its most serious, it means a unique attempt to bridge the political gap, by sending student high-fliers from the Greek and Turkish communities to study together in Britain.

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ENO director's contract extended for 5 years

DAVID LISTER

The board of the English National Opera has extended the contract of the company's general director, Dennis Marks. He will now be in post until 2001.

The new five-year contract signals a turnaround in Mr Marks's fortunes. When he joined the company from BBC Television three years ago, he was compared unfavourably with his predecessors, notably *Powerhouse* regime of Peter Jonas.

Attendances declined at first and last year his music director, Sir Edward, resigned amid rumours of a personality clash between the two.

But Mr Marks has now overseen a rise in ticket sales which

have reached the same level as the late Eighties, and yesterday announced a new season with seven new productions, an unusual feat among subsidised companies. Mr Marks said yesterday that he was still not convinced the ENO should remain at its home, the London Coliseum near Trafalgar Square in central London, even though it was bought for the company by the Government before the last election. He has commissioned a feasibility study to see whether the company should move to another London venue.

However, no move will be made in the near future. The ENO's chairman, John Baker, pledged that the company would stay at the Coliseum for the next five to seven years. "We

will ensure there is not a double closure here and at Covent Garden," he said.

The season opens on 12 September with a new production by Jonathan Miller of Verdi's *La Traviata*, which promises "a claustrophobic view of the Victorian world as viewed through the lenses of 19th-century photographers".

Another highlight will be the first British production of the German composer Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*, hailed as a "musical landmark of this century".

Reflecting the composer's hatred of militarism it calls for huge resources and inventive staging involving video, electronic tapes and simultaneous action.

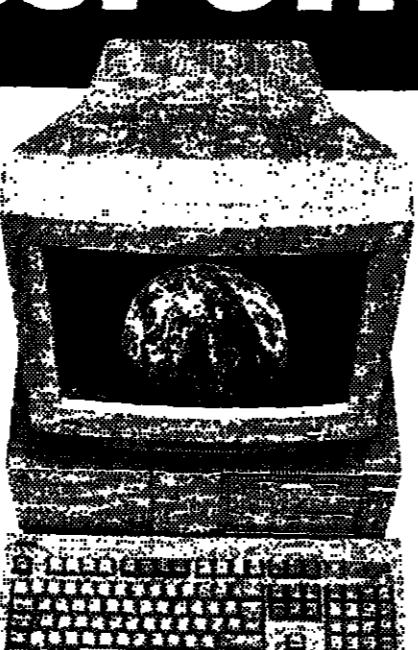
"It brings the past immediately to life, so that you can virtually hear the children breathe and hear Van Dyck's brush recording the likenesses of the children on his canvas.

"No doubt they moved a lot, so he had to work with great speed. But he had an eye and a hand that could accomplish such things."

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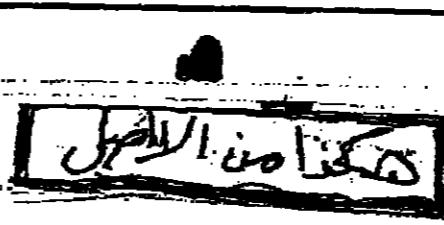
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international

Hard times for doves of Israel

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

A dove is at the centre of a furious row between the Israeli Labour party, the right-wing Likud opposition and animal rights groups. It started when Likud produced a television commercial for the election in 10 days' time. It shows a runner holding aloft the blue and white Israeli flag out of whose folds a live dove, symbolising peace, emerges. The message to Israeli voters is that for a patriotic peace they should vote Likud.

The dove and the flag-waving man were originally filmed separately. Unfortunately for Likud an Israeli television channel got hold of an unedited tape of the dove at the weekend. This shows that it is attached to its perch by an almost invisible string knotted to one of its legs. Far from swooping gracefully through the skies, the poor bird is brought up short by its cord after a flight of a few feet and flutters frantically to remain in the air.

Likud is now being denounced for cruelty by animal rights groups. Worse, from the party's point of view, the film of the tethered dove of peace is now being used by Labour in its television commercials. Their point is that under Likud, whatever its pretensions, peace talks with the Palestinians and other Arabs will go nowhere. The film intercuts the frantic attempts of the dove of peace to stay aloft with the faces of senior Likud leaders such as General Ariel Sharon and General Rafael Eitan, the leaders of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 which killed at least 12,000 people.

Many Israelis already believe the election of Binyamin Netanyahu, the Likud leader, on 29 May will effectively end the Oslo peace accords with the Palestinians, even if they are not formally cancelled. General Sharon, expressing doubts that "the Arabs want peace at all", last week spelled out his party's interpretation of Oslo, which is so narrow that the accords would bring no benefits to Palestinians. He adds that a settlement with Syria will be postponed until after the departure of Syrian President Hafez al-Assad.

It is surprising, given that the elections next week revolve around the issues of peace and war, that most Israelis agree they are the most boring since the foundation of the state.



Cool campaign: Binyamin Netanyahu (left) tones down past demagoguery while Shimon Peres plays the elder statesman



Photographs: AP

David is muted and the turnout at party rallies small. This

may be partly explained by emotional exhaustion after the drama of the last six months, which have seen the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister, suicide bombs in the heart of Israeli cities, and a savage little war in Lebanon. But the election is boring mainly because Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister, and Mr Netanyahu want it that way. Both are vulnerable. Mr Netanyahu was almost destroyed politically by the murder of Mr. Rabin last month. In the months before the assassination he whipped up crowds of far-right supporters with denunciations of the government's betrayal of Israel. The last thing Likud wants is overenthusiastic rallies which remind voters of Mr

Netanyahu's demagoguery and its consequences last year. For different reasons Labour also wants a cool campaign. It needs to show the 72-year-old Mr Peres as an elder statesman, contrasting his long experience with Mr Netanyahu who is only 46 and has never run anything. This is certainly the way Mr Peres sees himself. At moments he appears too wrapped up in his vision of himself as a world leader to fight an effective campaign. There are signs of regal arrogance such as his appointment of his Russian teacher to be Labour's only Russian immigrant candidate, though Russian Jews are more than 10 per cent of the electorate.

Fortunately for Mr Peres, Mr Netanyahu may be detected by even more voters. Labour supporters regard his promise of peace for Israel without territorial compromise as grossly irresponsible. They remember

months in office has not

changed his reputation for shiftiness. By way of illustration, Nahum Barnea, an Israeli columnist, describes how his barber in Jerusalem praised Mr Peres to the skies as a statesman and personal friend. Seeing that Mr Barnea did not believe him the barber proudly took a framed picture of Mr Peres out of a drawer, which is signed: "With affection, Shimon Peres." "Why don't you hang it on the wall?" asks Mr Barnea. His barber throws up his hands in amazed contempt and says: "Do you think I am crazy enough to lose all my clients?"

Fortunately for Mr Peres, Mr Netanyahu may be detected by even more voters. Labour supporters regard his promise of peace for Israel without territorial compromise as grossly irresponsible. They remember

siveness he resembles Newt

Gingrich, the US Republican Speaker of the House.

It may be that Mr Peres will

persuade Israeli voters that the

dove of peace stands a better

chance of prolonged flight with

him in the prime minister's

office. Mr Netanyahu does not

accept the Oslo accord though

he says he would not reoccupy

Gaza and the Palestinian towns

of the West Bank.

In practice, however, it may

be a poor outlook for doves in

Israel this year regardless of

whether Mr Peres or Mr

Netanyahu wins. The polls show

that the Knesset (parliament) as

a whole will shift to the right

compared with the 1992 election.

There will simply not be

enough votes in parliament to

support terms the Palestinians

could accept and the Oslo ac-

cords will begin to unravel.

IAN PHILLIPS
Paris

When the French singer and nightclub owner, Regine, makes news it is usually because she has been rubbing shoulders with a few stars. Since the Sixties her clubs have been coveted by the international jetset, from Frank Sinatra and Maria Callas to the Kennedys and Onassis, but now the "queen of the Parisian night" is making headlines for her involvement in alleged murder threats.

Last week her son, Lionel Rotage, was accused in a Boston court of "assault and intimidation against the members of the crew and passengers" on an American Airlines flight from Paris to Miami on 17 April. Regine, 66, was travelling with her son, husband and seven-year-old granddaughter, Daphne.

The trouble began when Mr Rotage, a music journalist and producer, lit up in the aisle. Although it was a smoking flight, it is strictly forbidden to smoke while standing up. After being ordered to put out his cigarette by a steward, Rotage allegedly said: "I don't give a damn about the law, I'm going to stay here and smoke even if you don't like it." When the steward threatened to report him to the flight commander he is said to have replied: "If you do that I'll shoot you."

When Regine joined the fray she was accused of shouting obscenities at the flight commander, telling him that: "The last time anyone spoke to me in that kind of voice was when the Germans occupied Paris."

Four hours later they were in Israel this year regardless of whether Mr Peres or Mr Netanyahu wins. The polls show that the Knesset (parliament) as a whole will shift to the right compared with the 1992 election. There will simply not be enough votes in parliament to support terms the Palestinians could accept and the Oslo accords will begin to unravel.

on the Champs-Elysées. "It was like something out of a film."

Regine owned Ledoyen until 1991 and opened her first club in Paris in 1960. She once had 19 clubs around the world and claims to have taught the Rothschild family how to do the twist and the Duke of Windsor how to surf. She has also enjoyed a career as a popular singer.

She accuses the airline of blowing the affair out of proportion and yesterday said that both she and her granddaughter will be taking legal action against the airline for ill treatment as well as moral and commercial damages. She also



Regine: Son faces US court over airline incident

accuses the crew of anti-Semitic remarks. Although all charges against Regine were dropped, Mr Rotage still risks a four-month suspended sentence and a \$250 (£160) fine. He has pleaded not guilty.

"We were made out to be hijackers" said a nervy-looking Regine. "Reporters said that all four of us had threatened the life of the flight commander. That must mean that my granddaughter did so with a crayon, my husband with his crosswords, me with my toothpick and my son with a pen."

Whatever the outcome, Regine is certain about one thing: "I won't be travelling on American Airlines in the future."

Quebec wrangle prompts a new Jewish exodus

Montreal — Festooned with paintings of tulips and cut-outs of planes with El-Al on their sides, the classroom beneath a suburban Montreal synagogue is usually reserved for kindergarten children.

This evening, though, the pupils are 30 Russian Jews who have just arrived in the city in search of new lives.

Mostly in their sixties, the husbands and wives are listening to Rabbi Israel Sirota, who, in Russian, is teaching them the rudiments of Jewish history and summarising the main world news events of the past week: prisoner exchanges in Bosnia, fighting in southern Lebanon. And he tries to answer their questions, some religious in nature, some day-to-day practical.

"These people come to Canada with no religious identity," said Rabbi Sirota, who landed here from Tashkent in 1973. "They have to learn Jewish history." Among the things the rabbi finds himself arranging for the new arrivals are circumcision (voluntary) for men, even many of the older ones. "Ninety per cent are not circumcised when they get here," he said.

As many as 10,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union have settled in Montreal in the past five years, said Rabbi Sirota. To many, the city, with its long and vibrant Jewish heritage, must have seemed a natural choice. A magnet at the beginning of this century for Jews from Eastern Europe (Ashkenazim), the city used to be called the "Vilna of North America", after Vilna, in Lithuania, once a famed seat of Jewish learning.

The Jewish face of Montreal is still well in evidence. Famous Montreal Jews include Leonard Cohen, the songwriter, the poet AM Klein and the author Mordecai Richler, who set many of his novels, notably *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, in the bagel bakeries and smoked-meat restaurants of The Main, a boulevard that bisects Montreal south to north and which, until migration to the suburbs in the 1950s, was the Jewish heart of the city.



You can still jostle with the mostly Jewish crowd at Schwartz's for a stool at the counter and a juicy smoked-meat sandwich.

But the kindergarten Russians have lost pace with history. As recruits to Montreal Jewry they are, in fact, almost oddities. The net flow of Jews, especially of the young and educated, is no longer into Montreal but out of it, to Toronto, Vancouver and cities in the United States. The reason is the interminable battle over Quebec's future in Canada.

The process began in 1976, when the Parti Québécois first swept to power and introduced laws to proclaim French its official language. The mostly Anglophone Jewish community, which numbered about 120,000, underwent a sudden exodus. About one in six left.

Since the mid-Eighties, the population has stabilised somewhat at about 101,000, but the overall number does not reflect new influxes, first of French-speaking Sephardic Jews from North Africa and, more recently, from the Russians.

Now, a new exodus may be under way. In October, the forces for secession lost a province-wide referendum but only by a razor-thin 1 per cent. The current Parti Québécois government, headed by the charismatic Lucien Bouchard, appears intent on staging

David Usborne sees evidence that the sovereignty issue is blighting an old way of life

another referendum, although by law it must wait until it is itself re-elected to govern the province. Elections are set for 1998.

The atmosphere of uncertainty, meanwhile, is overwhelming. It is felt by all English-speakers, among them many Jews. "We are at a crossroads," said Lawrence Bergman.

Richler, who has homes here and in London, said that what happened in Montreal just before Passover last month was so insane as to be "hysterical".

Officials from the province's Office de la Langue Française discovered that the kosher labelling on imports from New York of the unleavened bread, matzoh, used by Jews during Passover, was printed in English, instead of French. They ordered them to be withdrawn from sale. Some Jewish families were deprived of matzoh for the season, and the community felt victimised.

That and the Parizeau business has torn it for a lot of people," suggested Richler, whose five children have all abandoned the city. "It is a terrible situation. The young only come to Montreal for funerals. The Jewish community has diminished by a larger number than anyone is willing to admit."

Richler said that it is the professional and wealthy Jews who will abandon Quebec and that the economy, as well as the many Jewish institutions, will suffer.

"A lot of affluent members of the community are saying: 'Screw them — if they don't want us any more, we are not going to contribute any more'."

If the Jews are sitting on their bags, one irony is inescapable: by fleeing, they may contribute to a nationalistic victory next time round. (And Rabbi Sirota's flock will hardly be enough to turn the trend around).

"If we leave, it would just play into the hands of the sovereigntists," said Mr Bergman.

"They will have the sovereigntist majority that they need."

Is it possible that is exactly what Mr Parizeau and the zealots of the French-language office had in mind?

The Jews of Montreal

Jewish population of city:

1976: 120,000 (historical peak)

1981: 103,425

1991: 101,210 (total city population 3,127,000)

Number of Sephardim (non-Orthodox) in 1991: 21,000

Proportion of Orthodox Jews: 24% (New York 13%)

Proportion of elderly: 22.4% (1 in 10 are 75 or over)

Proportion of young (15-24): 14.6% (1981: 12.420 (1991))

Proportion of children at Jewish day schools: 40% (higher than any other North American city)

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Hong Kong handover: Business anger over 'Newsweek' attack

Tycoons take battle with Patten to Major

STEPHEN VINES
Hong Kong



Chris Patten: Criticised 'privileged' businessmen

The simmering battle between the leaders of Hong Kong's business community and Chris Patten, the Governor, moved a step closer to open warfare yesterday, when the business leaders took the unusual step of writing to John Major, the Prime Minister, to express their "profound disappointment" at remarks made by Mr Patten during his recent visit to the United States.

Mr Patten expressed disappointment over the Hong Kong tycoons' failure to stand up for the colony's institutions in the face of China's resumption of sovereignty next year.

Not since Governor John Pope Hennessy was virtually hounded out of the colony by business leaders in 1882 has there been such a rift between the Queen's representative and the tycoons who have traditionally wielded both business and political power. Back then the governor was despaired for attempts to lessen discrimination against Hong Kong's majority Chinese population.

The letter, sent yesterday, is signed by the colony's seven most influential business organisations, collectively representing just about all the

most powerful businessmen in Hong Kong. For days they have been discussing how to respond to the Governor's remarks, which appeared in a *Newsweek* cover story entitled "Betraying Hong Kong".

The magazine quoted Mr Patten as saying: "Why is it that privileged people are prepared to sign up to those arrangements whose sole intention is to choke off the voice of those who, by every measure, represent the majority of public opinion." Mr Patten added: "They

wouldn't be doing it if most of them didn't have foreign passports in their back pockets."

The business leaders say in their letter that "Mr Patten sees fit to criticise the very people who have helped make Hong Kong the success it is today. The attack on them and the reference to having foreign passports in their back pockets were both inappropriate and divisive".

The six-paragraph letter continues by saying: "Mr Patten has, through his inappropriate and unjustified attacks on the business community, ended up doing Hong Kong a great disservice".

Although the Governor appears to have given up hope of mending fences with the business community, his spokesman, Kerry McGlynn, last night issued a statement saying Mr Patten "has always been an admirer and an advocate of the great contribution the business community has made to Hong Kong's spectacular success".

However there was a sting in the tail, as Mr McGlynn said: "The community will no doubt note that while a number of businessmen have chosen to criticise the Governor on the basis of something that he has never said, they did not band together to write similar letters

of protest when threats were made to our human rights legislation, the independence of the judiciary, the political neutrality of the civil service and to our democratic institutions. There is still time for them to do so."

The row was not unexpected. Most business leaders are solidly lined up behind the incoming administration and have taken their cue from Peking, where Mr Patten is regarded as being on a par with some of China's other political demons.

Last night a government official described the businessmen's letter as "a release of pent-up frustration and anger at what they consider to be the way they have been side-lined, compared with the shots when they called the shots here".

The business leaders are most upset by the Governor's suggestion of hypocrisy.

"In spite of this", they write, "the business community continues to stand steadfastly behind Hong Kong."

And standing behind the businessmen are labour organisations. In the bizarre atmosphere which now prevails here, pro-Peking trade unionists, were mobilised to demonstrate against criticism of the business community when Mr Patten returned from the US.



The inauguration of Mr Lee and vice-president Lien Chan yesterday. Photograph: AFP

Lee offers to 'go in peace' to China

TERESA POOLE
Peking

In a carefully pitched inauguration address, President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan yesterday said he wanted to make a "journey of peace" to China, but he offered Peking no detailed measures to improve relations.

Mr Lee also told a cheering crowd at the stadium at Tainan, outside Taipei, that a continuing policy of "pragmatic diplomacy" would secure Taiwanese people "the respect and treatment they deserve in the international arena", an unwelcome signal to Peking that the democratically elected president will proceed with Taiwan's push for greater global status.

In Taipei, the stock market tumbled 4 per cent because of concern at mainland leaders' reaction. The business sector was disappointed that Mr Lee had not included any specific mention of moves towards direct air shipping, and communications links with the mainland. After elections in March, which Mr Lee won by a landslide, there had been some speculation that movement on the "three links" might be a concession by Taipei.

The run-up to Taiwan's first democratic presidential elections were dominated by weeks of large-scale military manoeuvres by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in and near the Taiwan Strait as Peking attempted to frighten voters away from supporting Mr Lee. Peking's fury against Mr Lee was sparked almost a year ago when he secured a visit to the United States, prompting a tirade from China accusing him of moving towards Taiwan independence.

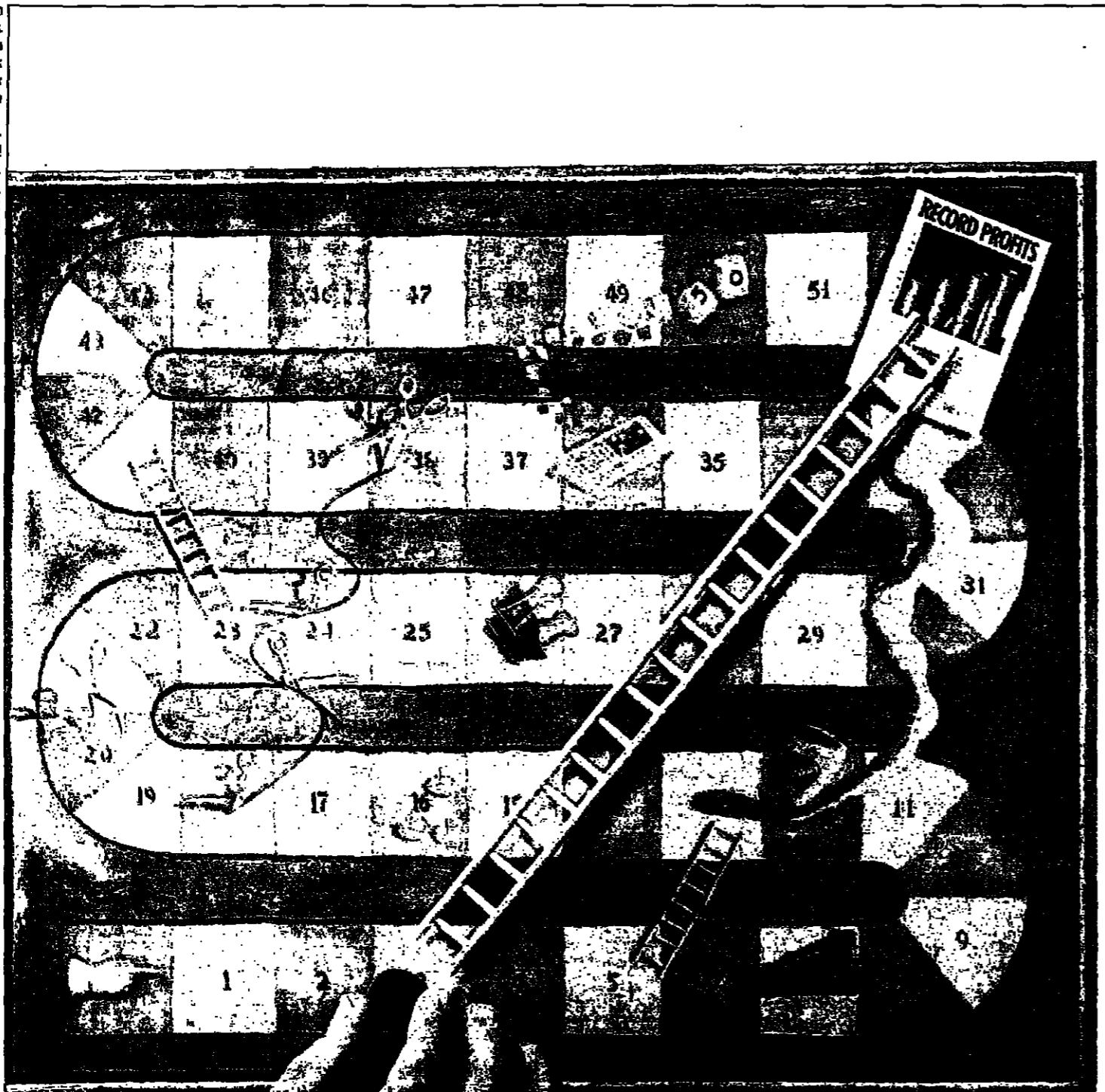
Yesterday's speech trod a careful path between appearing to offer an olive branch while not actually offering anything likely to placate Peking. "I would like to embark upon a journey of peace to mainland China taking with me the consensus and will of the 21.3 million [Taiwanese] people," Mr Lee said. He was willing to meet with the top leadership of the Chinese Communists "for a direct exchange of views in order to open up a new era of communication and co-operation between the two sides". Taiwan independence was "totally unnecessary or impossible", he added.

The idea of a top-level meeting between Mr Lee and his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin, has been floated before, but has floundered on the question of the capacity in which Mr Lee would be recognised. He would certainly not be acceptable as President of Taiwan, or in any Republic of China governmental role, while Mr Lee himself would not tolerate depiction as the mere head of a Chinese province. It is also unlikely that any such meeting would be considered until the two leaders had something concrete to discuss. The existing process of meetings, conducted only by supposedly non-governmental bodies, were halted by Peking last year on Mr Lee's US visa success.

By last night there had still been no official Chinese response to Mr Lee's speech. Peking will probably demand "concrete actions" from Mr Lee before there can be any repairs done to relations. Halting his "pragmatic diplomacy" is a prerequisite for any positive response, something which he made clear yesterday he had no intention of doing. There are no imminent plans, however, for any high-profile foreign trips, because Washington has lent heavily on him to avoid actions which will again enrage Peking.

Several of Mr Lee's comments may annoy China's leaders. His slogan "Manage the great Taiwan, nurture a new Chinese culture", laid claim to the role as a custodian of Chinese culture. "Equipped with a much higher level of education and development than in other parts of China, Taiwan is set gradually to exercise its leadership role in cultural development and take upon itself the responsibility for nurturing a new Chinese culture." Such a culture would include political democracy, he added.

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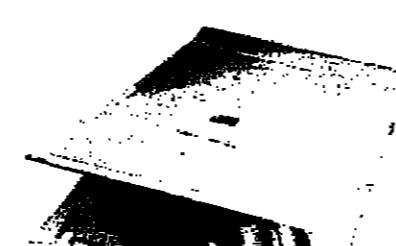
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ALMATY DAYS

Turks bearing Coca Cola put fermented mare's milk in the shade

We stopped counting at \$10bn (£6.6bn). That, by the reckoning of the eminent former governor of the Turkish Central Bank sitting beside me, was the combined annual turnover of heads of Turkish companies to the front half of our aircraft winging over the Caspian Sea to Central Asia.

Across the aisle was a grand marble quaner from Akyon. A white-haired textile magnate from Denizli was with us for the ride. And by the window, one of more than 100 executives was brushing up on a book about the power of the Turkish mafia.

And, of course, there were our hosts from the Anadolu Group, who were betting \$80m on their future growth as brewers and bottlers of soft drinks in a swath of formerly Soviet-dominated territory from the Balkans to the border of China.

Times have certainly changed since I first travelled with Turkish businessmen to their ancestral homelands in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Back then, in 1990, I sat next to a shifty-looking jeweller from the grand bazaar. My main contact had been a "Grey Wolf" nationalist militant out to stir up a pro-Turkish revolution.

The Turkish nationalist revolution lasted a year in one country, Azerbaijan, and was crushed in the bud elsewhere. But, dispelling premature reports of victory by rivals from Iran and elsewhere, private Turkish businessmen have stayed the course. They are now older and wiser, leaving to Russia what is Russia's and sticking to business.

"We are not trying to replace anybody. We are not in politics. In fact, my main difficulty has been persuading people that not all Turks were crooks," said the chief executive of Anadolu Group's beverage division.

At Almaty airport, as the industrialists were whisked away a smiling official disappeared with the \$70 a Briton must pay. I started to wait, kicking my heels with a Japanese executive from Honda motorbikes scouting the Turkish route to Central Asia.

Then, preceded by a rank odour, perhaps not unlike that of a yak after a long winter tied up inside a tent, came the passengers off the next flight, looking for all the world like camp followers of Genghis Khan.

I greeted one of them, a friendly old crone with a deep brown face, leathery skin and the high cheekbones of the steppe. To our mutual astonishment, primitive Turkish proved a joint language, enough to discover that she was an ethnic Kazakh from Mongolia migrating to the new Kazakh state.

The lady was making a wise decision, if the bankers I later met in the pleasantly green, ordered city of Almaty are to be believed. According to them, Central Asia has made its peace with its powerful neighbours Russia, China and Iran, and is now turning an important economic corner.

In Kazakhstan and its close neighbour, the Kyrgyz Republic, currencies have been stable for a year and inflation is heading below an annual 30 per cent. State businesses have been privatised fast, even if management is still in the hands of former bosses. People seem to have a spring in their step.

Businessmen like the way the mostly Communist-era leaders have concentrated wealth and decision-making power into their own hands, even though parliaments have been sidelined.

These leaders will decide the fate of Central Asia's dominant oil and mining business, which involves multinational giants, huge amounts of money and long lead times. But at the bottom end of the market, the Turks are highly active even as bakers, kebab-shops owners or fancy restaurants, and their total investment may be \$1bn.

Much of the new hotel and construction work is being done by Turkish companies. Truck, bus and textile factories are on the way, often in association with Western partners. Banking and air links are often best through Istanbul, and Turkish subsidiaries of American banks have played key roles in big loan syndications and privatisations.

About 100 Turkish schools have opened up for business in the region, most of them privately owned, and often financed by people with moderate-to-strong Islamic views.

A Kyrgyz student from one of the few Turkish state-aided schools led our tour bus in Bishkek, capital of the Kyrgyz Republic. She must have been puzzled by questions from the textile magnate as to whether the Kyrgyz were Muslims, whether they had built their mosques, and whether they still drank "kumis", the fermented mare's milk that is an ancient Turkic drink of the steppes.

She knew we were there to celebrate bringing locally bottled Coca-Cola to the Kyrgyz people. It was being drunk like wine, and at a similar price, in the cafés of Bishkek. Only in the parks could I find traditional drinks of fermented wheats and barley. But the old-timers still had their revenge. It was served in plastic cups stamped "Pepsi".

Hugh Pope

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obituaries/gazette

Jon Pertwee

It is hard to recall a time when Jon Pertwee was not on the airwaves, doing funny voices or pulling silly faces. He made his name on radio in *The Navy Lark*, the BBC's longest-running radio comedy series, then achieved a successful transition to television with *Dr Who* and, later, *Worzel Gummidge*.

His flexible features and extraordinary vocal range made him much sought-after for comedy roles on stage, such as *Lyceum in A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1963), and the lead in *There's a Girl in My Soup* (1966), both in London and New York, while the more dramatic parts he coveted proved more elusive. He was even denied the chance to do Restoration comedy to which he would have been ideally suited.

A descendant of an aristocratic French family, Pertwee de Laillevaillant, Pertwee was the son of Roland Pertwee, a respected actor and writer, who wrote several successful plays and film scripts in the 1930s. Jon's brother Michael went on to become a stage and television writer. Their parents separated soon after Jon was born, and he and Michael were brought up by their paternal grandmother, until his father remarried.

A teenage rebel, Pertwee was expelled from his prep school and, later, Sherborne. But his childhood in Devon, though far from happy, proved useful when he was creating the television persona of Worzel Gummidge. In an interview once, he said he felt far more empathy with the quick-tempered and emotional scarecrow than he ever did with Dr Who.



Pertwee as Worzel Gummidge (1981), the inscrutable scarecrow

Yet, according to friends, his flamboyant, actorly Dr Who was another variation of the prismatic Pertwee personality. He had a Who-mobile specially built while playing the role. He had a particular interest in things mechanical. In the 1950s his white Chevrolet had an electric hood, and a speedboat on tow, for water-skiing. In the evenings he might be seen in a velvet cape and a fedora.

After RADA, from which

he was also thrown out, allegedly for writing rude remarks on the lavatory walls

(besides, the principal considered him talentless), he joined a travelling theatre company, and then did the usual round of repertory theatres, taking anything he could get and, by his own admission, overcharging at every opportunity.

He was spurred on by an encounter with Charles Laughton, who said that dismissal from RADA was the only proper way for an actor to start his career. While the father he revered did not try to prevent him from becoming an actor, neither did he show any real interest, so Pertwee looked to friends and colleagues for encouragement.

What determined the course of his career was the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 and the six years he spent in the Royal Navy, first serving on the doomed HMS Hood, then reporting to the Admiralty on standards of naval broadcasting. During this period he met the late Eric Barker, then a leading name in radio, and went on to work with him in two series, *Waterlogged Spa* and *Up the Pole*.



Pertwee as Dr Who in 1974: a posturing Edwardian dandy with a great mane of wavy white hair

ries still have an enduring appeal world-wide to this day.

Hired to exaggerate the mildly humorous interpretation Patrick Troughton had given the character, Pertwee insisted he be allowed to play the role straight. Taking their cue from the success of James Bond films, the production team agreed with him, working more action and gadgetry into the show. Recorded in colour for the first time, the series benefited from many intelligently written stories, an increasing use of location work and a wider range of deadly monsters, from the Autons - killer shop-window dummies - to ancient intelligent reptiles and giant spiders.

The delightful introduction of the Doctor's very own Moriarty, the Master, played by the late Roger Delgado, was another key factor in the show's renewed appeal, after declining ratings threatened its cancellation at the end of the Sixties.

The Earthbound nature of many of this Doctor's adventures prompted Pertwee's oft-

quoted recipe for Dr Who's lasting success - that nothing frightened an audience more than "Yeti on your loo in Tooting Bec". One of his favourite stories was *The Daemons*, a thrilling six-part set almost entirely in a quaint English village haunted by a millennium-old menace, which ends with the local church being blown to pieces - a model effect that worked so well that viewers at the time apparently jammed the BBC switchboard with complaints.

In addition to swapping his time-travelling Police Box for an Edwardian roadster, the Doctor was allied with the United Nations Intelligence Task Force, soldiers and weaponry providing a realistic background for this science-fiction series. The Unit "family" as it came to be called became firm favourites with the general public, aided no doubt by Pertwee's personal popularity in Fleet Street. The on-screen rapport between Pertwee and regular actors such as Nicholas Courtney and Katy Manning, the latter playing his

longest-serving companion, was boosted by Pertwee's enthusiasm for encouraging a sense of team spirit in his supporting cast.

The combination of a popular choice of actor in the lead role, strong casting and stories netted Dr Who an average of over 8 million viewers a week when Pertwee played the lead. With just a touch of the humour he was expected to give the role, Pertwee was ever the dashing Doctor, bringing an Edwardian elegance to the character. That he was such a success is evidenced by his enthusiastic reception at Dr Who conventions as far afield as Coventry, Indianapolis and Sydney, Australia. His period on Dr Who will always be much remembered and much loved by the show's many fans.

Jon Pertwee, actor: born London 7 July 1919; married 1954 Jean Marsh (marriage dissolved), 1960 Ingeborg Rhoesa (one son, one daughter); died Connecticut 20 May 1996.

Kumi Sugai

Kumi Sugai belonged to the first group of pioneering contemporary Japanese artists to adopt western styles of painting, and to practise them abroad, chiefly in Paris or New York. Though he was born and died in Kobe, his parents were of Malay origin, belonging to a family of ex-servant musicians.

He studied art at the Osaka School of Fine Arts, where he became acquainted with western painting techniques through the teaching of Yoshihara Hanyoshi. At the same time he practised calligraphy and was fascinated by typography, both of which were to play an important part of his later work.

But like so many Japanese writers and artists, he dropped out of school and his first job was with the Hankyu Railway Company (1937) where he was their commercial designer and a creator of advertising posters.

Sugai left for Paris in 1952, where he found Abstract Impressionism was the prevailing mode, the first of many movements he was to encounter and learn from, ranging from Pop and Op to Antart, Kinetic Art to Minimalism. He began by adapting traditional *ukiyo* woodblock techniques to his personal vision of a foreign culture. The forms were contemporary, but the colours had the simplicity and radiant purity of classic masters of the art that enraptured Van Gogh and the Post Impressionists. He also experimented with silk-screen printing and lithography.

His first Paris production used graffiti with an unfailing sense of subtle colouring, evoking city scenes, men and animals at the limits of abstraction, with a certain minimalism of snappy suggestion by his friend Giacometti.

His work was immediately noticed by prominent art critics and gallery owners, including the writer Charles Estienne, who arranged for him to exhibit at the Salon d'Octobre in 1953. Sugai's career then took off, with one-man shows in Paris and at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 1954, and a first exhibition of his gouaches at the St George's Gallery in London in 1955, during which he received an invitation to exhibit at the Pittsburgh International.

He went on to participate in all the important group exhibitions, notably at São Paulo Biennale, where he won the Best Foreign Artist Prize, and the Kassel Dokumenta, and the Venice Biennale. He had many one-man shows in New York, Ljubljana (where he won First Prize in 1961) and at the Tokyo Biennale in the same year. In 1962, under the influence

of Giacometti, he transformed some of his subjects into minimalist sculptures, and illustrated two books of poetry by the art critic Jean-Clarence Lambert, who wrote extensively about him, as did other essayists like Michel Ragon, Hubert Juin and André Pieyre de Mandiargues. He received extensive coverage in Thomas Messer's *Modern Art* (Guggenheim Foundation, 1962).

Like many of his contemporaries, Sugai also wrote essays, and published a book in French, *Le Quelle sans fin* (1970), presumably with the help of Lambert. The famous copperplate etcher, Ikeda Masuo (born 1934) had even won the Akuagawa Prize in 1977 for his novella *Ego Kai ni sasayaku* ("Homage to the Aegean"). Print-makers were fascinated by the uses of banal everyday signs and symbols, and often included odd words in various languages in their compositions. One of Sugai's favourite literary devices was to feature large capitals in his works, and even to make a letter the sole subject of the picture.

One of his many successful and amusing essays in this style was the famous "S" series, in which the letter took on a definite personality in various ravishing colours and typographies. In the 1960s, Sugai produced almost heraldic images of traffic signs and directional panels, in which repetition of purely abstract simple forms evokes a hallucinating atmosphere, in dream-like colourings. His work became more and more abstract, geometrical but still suggesting a certain reality, like his well-known *Festival de Tokyo*, which I often admired in the Tokyo Museum of Modern Art, or his "Autoroute" series in which he replaced his emblematic signs and calligraphic icons with a refined and sensitive graphicism embracing all kinds of textures and rainbow transparencies.

Though he remained active to the end of his life, Kumi Sugai fell out of favour during the 1970s and 1980s, along with the rest of the Ecole de Paris, when the centre of innovation became New York and the West Coast. But we can still enjoy his best work in all the great art museums of the world, and his death will certainly be followed by a reverential retrospective in his native city. He was a great universal abstractionist, of that rare kind whose "endless quest" for more refined forms of expression never lacked a warm human feeling.

James Kirkup

Kumi Sugai, painter and printmaker: born Kobe, Japan 13 March 1919; died Kobe 14 May 1996.

Simon Weinstock

Simon Weinstock was the third descendant of a great modern racing dynasty. His family owned several top-class racehorses, the greatest of which was undoubtedly Troy, the winner by a staggering seven lengths of the Derby at Epsom in 1979.

The colt, which ran in the colours of Weinstock's grandfather, the late Sir Michael Sobell, went on to win the Irish Derby at the Curragh, the King George VI and the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes at Ascot, and the Benson & Hedges Gold Cup at York. Troy then sired Helen Street, who won the Irish Oaks for the Weinstocks in 1985.

Weinstock was the family's expert on breeding and form, who basically managed all their racing affairs. He was active alongside his father Lord Weinstock in the family's racing business for over 20 years. Father and son had equal shares in almost all the horses that passed through their hands.

Most of the horses the Weinstocks raced were bred by them at the 300-acre Ballymacol Stud farm in County Meath in Ireland. The trainers

they patronised over the years included Major Dick Hern, the French trainers David Smaga - who trained Lancaster to win the 1983 Prix Ganay for them at Longchamp - and John Hammond, Lord Huntingdon, Peter Chapple-Hyam and Michael Stoute. This season the Weinstocks have 37 horses spread between eight different trainers in Britain and France.

The most notable horse to run in Simon Weinstock's own stable was Ella-Mana-Mou, whom he shrewdly purchased out of the trainer Guy Harwood's stable at the end of the 1979 season. Under the care of his new trainer Dick Hern, Ella-Mana-Mou went on to win the Eclipse Stakes at Sandown Park and the King George VI and the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes at Ascot in 1980.

The Weinstocks' best filly was Sun Princess, who won the Oaks by 12 lengths as a maiden (the first race she had ever won) in 1983 and then went on to further Classic success in the St Leger at Doncaster in 1984.

With a big race which always eluded Weinstock was the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe at Longchamp. The family came loose on a number of occasions: Homeric, Ella-Man-Mou and Sun Princess were all placed in the race, but their biggest disappointment came in 1979 when even Troy succumbed to the family's Arc hoodoo, running below his best to finish third to Three Troikas.

More recently, the Weinstocks won last year's Irish 2,000 Guineas at the Curragh with Spectrum, who went on to win the Champion Stakes at Newmarket. The colt, who the Weinstocks own in partnership with Robert Sangster, remains in training this year. And they have a contender for this year's Derby in Nash House, who, prior to his disappointing fourth place in the Dante Stakes at York last week, had been doing ante-post favouritism for the Epsom Classic.

Ian Davies

Simon Weinstock was a leading member of the small, tightly knit group that runs General Electric Co (GEC), the largest and most profitable of Britain's defence and heavy engineering businesses, writes Stephen Aris.

He was also the only and much-loved son of Lord Weinstock, the creator and driving force of the modern GEC.

It is no secret that it was Arnold Weinstock's dearest wish that Simon should succeed him as chief executive. As Weinstock père is already several years past the official GEC retirement date, the succession should have been settled some time ago. But the City institutions were reluctant to give Simon their backing. And though the Weinstock family is the largest single private shareholder, the City's views could not be ignored - which is why, earlier this year, the palm went, not to Simon, but to George Simpson of Lucas.

With a figure as strong as Arnold Weinstock, it was inevitable that the son should have been somewhat in his father's shadow. Educated at Winchester and Magdalene College, Oxford, where he read Greats, Simon Weinstock struck those that met him as a young man as being shy and ill at ease in large groups or in unfamiliar surroundings. However, close friends and colleagues say that

he was good company with a tremendous sense of humour.

His wedding to Laura Legh, the daughter of Major Sir Francis Legh, equerry to the Queen Mother and private secretary to Princess Margaret, was a grand affair with a reception at St James's Palace, the centrepiece of which was an enormous cake decorated with the colours carried by the Weinstocks' Derby winner, Troy.

After a spell in the City with S.G. Warburg, Simon Weinstock joined GEC in 1982 and five years later was appointed to the board as commercial director. He had special responsibility for the defence side of the business. He negotiated, among others, the Marconi/Matra joint venture and played an all-important part in the company's dealings with the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, the most recent concerning the takeover of VSEL, the warship builder.

Simon Weinstock, businessman and racehorse owner: born 24 February 1952; married Laura Legh (three daughters); died 18 May 1996.



Weinstock: expert on breeding

Photograph: Bancroft Photography

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS
RAEVES, Joan. On 10 May 1996, tragically, in an car accident in her sleep after a long illness so bravely fought. Donations in her memory to St Catherine's Hospice, Sevenoaks, may be sent to Ernest Brigham Funeral Directors Ltd, 51 St John Street, Bridgwater, East Yorkshire, YO16 5NN.

Announcements for Deaths, Births & Deaths & Deaths (Deaths, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Weddings, Anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E1 8TD, telephone 0171-292 2011 or faxed to 0171-292 2010, and are charged at 25.50 a line (VAT extra). The Independent's switchboard number is 0171-292 2000.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Albrecht Dürer, painter and engraver, 1471; Philip II, King of Spain, 1527; Alexander Pope, poet and satirist, 1688; Francis Egerton, third Duke of Bridgewater, canal pioneer, 1763; Joseph Fouche, D'Orléans French revolutionist and secret police chief, 1763; Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom, 1926; Mr Michael Caine, 1933; Dennis Price, former Prime Minister of Australia, 1966; Mr David Hockney, 1970; Sir Terry Lightfoot, bandleader and jazz musician, 1976; Mr Leonard Manuscis, architect, 1907; Dr Leonard Mullins, authority on rubber, 1978; Mr Derek Nandy, Head of Equal Opportunities, Social Services Department, Nottinghamshire County Council, 1980; Mr Andrew Neil, former Editor, the Sunday Times, 1971; Miss Rosalind Plowright, soprano, 1978; Mr Harold Robbins, novelist, 1980; Mr Harry Robinson, President of the Irish Republic, 1922; Mr Lee Seyer, singer, 1982; Professor Sir David Smith, President, Wolfson College, Oxford, 1986; Mr Robert Welch, silversmith, 1987; Professor Stanley Wells, Shakespearean scholar, 1988; Mr Desmond Wilcox, film actor, 1987; Deaths: Henry VI, King of England, murdered 1471; Hernando de Soto, soldier and explorer, 1542; James Graham, First Marquess of Montrose, Scottish royalist, executed 1650; Robert Harley, first Earl of Oxford, statesman, 1724; Christopher Smart, poet, 1771; Christian Thomsen, archaeologist, 1863; Prince Paul Anton von Galathen Esterhazy, diplomat, 1866; Franz von Suppe (Francesco Cavaliere Suppe Demelli), composer, 1895; General

Lectures

National Gallery: Colin Wiggins, "May-be (iii): Rembrandt, or not?", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Agnes Holden, "Stained glass" (for visitors with visual impairment), 2.30pm. British Museum: Lynn Meskell, "Death and the Egyptian Middle Class: a view from the ground up", 1.15pm. National Portrait Gallery: Angela Cox, "Regency Women", 1.10pm. Royal Society: The Jagdish Chandra Bose Memorial Lecture (to be held at University College, London): Professor M.M. Sharma, "Microphase reaction engineering", 5.30pm. Royal Over-Seas League: Jane Brown, "Lutyens and the Edwardians", 7pm. Royal Institute of British Architects, Architecture Centre: Lansdowne & Bell, "Collapsing Time", 6.30pm.

Luncheons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir Nicholas Bonner Bt MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, hosted a

luncheon yesterday at the Royal Society, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1, in honour of Dr Blagovesh Sendov, Speaker of the Bulgarian Parliament, and Mrs Anna Sendova.

Dinners

Royal Society of Saint George: Sir Geoffrey Ellerton was the host at a luncheon held yesterday at Overseas House, St James's, London SW1, in honour of Mr Mwanyangela Ngali, High Commissioner for Kenya, and of Mrs Ngali.

Receptions

India League: Mr Julius Silverman, Chairman of the India League, and Mr S.N. Gouraria, Honorary General Secretary, were host of a reception held yesterday evening at the India Club, Aldwych, London WC2, by the India League in honour of Mr Gopal Gandhi, Director of the Nehru Centre, who has been appointed India's High Commissioner to the Republic of South Africa, and of Mrs Tariq Gandhi. Amongst those present were:

Mr Michael Foot, President; Mr John Grigg, Mr John B. Higgins, Dr and Mrs K.S. Shrivastava.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh, President of World Wide Fund for Nature, Viscount Odysey & Mother Ltd, Canary Wharf, London E1; as President, Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, attends the Commissioner's Dinner at Arsenals' Hall, London EC2. The Duke of York, Chairman of the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851

gai

Wanted: a modern British patriotism

Mrs Thatcher took her handbag to it. The British Council was one of those British institutions – the BBC another – that she decided was neither commercial nor patriotic so she bashed it with relish. During the Major years, skin has grown over the BBC's weeds; Auntie now looks fat and sassy. But the British Council is in trouble still. It deserved a good shake but not the death by a thousand cuts the Treasury seems determined to inflict upon it. It should be replaced by a modern institution suited to Britain's needs at the end of this century. It should not be overlooked, forgotten and then buried.

This week, the Foreign Office will decide whether to stick with its planned reductions in the council's support – reductions that seem the more unfair because staff claim to have been changing the way they work in just the ways ministers have demanded. The British Council now sells English-as-a-foreign-language courses. It puts on fairs in the Far East to attract students to British universities. It liaises with publishers. Yet it remains in the fiscal firing line.

That may be because it has fallen between stools. It has not been, like the BBC, robust enough to take some private sector shillings while retaining its public identity. Yet neither has it turned itself into a candidate for privatisation, for it still does things like meet foreign students arriving at Heathrow, which pr-

ivate companies would not pay for. It is a victim of Whitehall turf war, a symbol of the increasing enfeeblement of the Foreign Office under Malcolm Rifkind.

Yet the council's problem goes deeper. It lacks a popular mandate, but not because it promotes concert tours or is in any obvious way highbrow (in fact, the British Council's besetting problem is a kind of middlebrow mediocrity). Its problem is us. Its fate is bound up with the half-debate now going on in this country about identity and nationhood. The crude imagery and debased language used by the Euro-sceptics (see Julian Critchley's polemic on the following page) should not obscure the resonance of their fear of the foreign and the future. In such circumstances, the British Council is condemned to construct a Britain for external consumption made up of safe culture, Shakespeare with Burns and Dylan Thomas in supporting roles.

What nation, whose culture? Any institution that dares to dive into this explosive territory is bound to live dangerously. The British Council suffers from anachronism. People think of it in terms derived from Graham Greene or, somewhat more up to date, Malcolm Bradbury. Libraries in Brno or Vilnius might once have served as a civilised corner during the Cold War. But in the age of the Internet, what is the purpose of the British Council? Would the Bulgarians rather have

fast moderns or George Eliot? There are no reliable cost-benefit equations in cultural diplomacy. Defenders of the British Council tend to resort to outrageous non sequiturs linking performances of the Bard in Cairo to Anglo-Egyptian amity. Other nations, the French and Germans, have never bothered with that kind of calculation. They do it because they are surer of who they are. German politicians do not worry whether the Goethe Institute helps to sell BMWs.

The British Council's problem is not just to do with the meaning of Britishness but the character of culture. These

days, culture escapes the bounds of the "arts". It long ago ceased to be politically possible to define it as "high" in TS Eliot's terms. It is not a surrender to relativism to acknowledge that performances and products of high quality are made under all kinds of rubrics, musical, theatrical, sporting, fashion, film, "style", architecture and design. The British Council has suffered from being out of touch with this culture.

And this kind of cultural capital is increasingly what this nation will have to trade on. Culture is serious business, although it does not look like it. Only a hypocritical government would deny

to fashion designers, music makers and performers the kind of assistance laid on over the years for munitions manufacturers and machine-tool makers. The practical question is: what mechanism will best promote culture, made up as it is by many "small and medium enterprises" let alone a near-anarchic gallery of doers. The answer is not the British Council as currently structured. Some new organisation, cooler, more credible, quicker on its feet, is needed.

The council's functions should be repartitioned – as part of a wider Whitehall overhaul. Student welfare and government sponsorship should be a universality responsibility. For the "cultural mission", two principles hold. British culture is saleable. If only half the recent hyping of British artistic renaissance is true (and something remarkable does seem to be going on in a number of fields), then there are products aplenty. Foreign markets are eager. The state can assist by facilitating, promoting, celebrating.

The second principle is pride. Yesterday the Liberal Democrat leader launched a spirited attack on the Tory claim to be the party of patriots. A former military man, he scorned the identification of national strength with isolation. In the modern world, national pride might even take the form of feeling pride in the Vivienne Westwoods of the next generation.

Sacking comes to the world of George Smiley

It would never have happened in Smiley's day. Then, spies disgruntled and disaffected with the secret service that employed them fought back by selling secrets to the enemy. Treason, they called it. But it was all done away from the glare of publicity. Between friends who were enemies, and all that. In the eyes of those secretive establishment patriarchs, the Nineties strategy for the disgruntled spy will seem an even greater betrayal. One sacked spy wants to take MI6 to the European Court of Human Rights with a claim for unfair dismissal.

Imagine it, that ever-so-secret, ever-Brutish institution forced to wash its dirty linen in a European court. Who knows where it might end? James Bond would have to answer countless charges of sexual harassment. And no one could justify the recruitment of Wormold, the hapless vacuum-cleaner salesman – Graham Greene's man in Havana – on grounds of merit and equal opportunities. What incompetence are spies dismissed for: putting coded information in the wrong hollow tree trunk?

"National security" should not save MI6 from such public humiliation. We want to know why our spies get sacked.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Europol treaty causes concern

Sir: The decision by the Home Secretary to postpone the ratification of the Europol treaty is to be applauded (report, 20 May), albeit that this decision was made only to retaliate against the EU ban on British beef and beef products.

The Europol treaty, once in force, will pose real concerns to all within the EU in relation to data protection and the use and storage of sensitive information. There are genuine concerns as to the treaty's lawfulness both under English law and that of the European convention on Human Rights. However, there has been no detailed review of the treaty for its compliance with long established common-law traditions or international human rights standards.

At the same time, the insistence of the UK that jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice is not to be extended to the treaty will mean that it will not be possible to have an overall European-wide determination of the treaty. As a result, the guarantee of an effective remedy for the treaty's breach is unlikely. Leaving the resolution of disputes to domestic law, as is currently envisaged, will result in a "hotch potch" approach. This will inevitably mean that within one jurisdiction a remedy might be forthcoming, whereas in another, where there is not the same level of data protection, an individual will get no redress.

The Europol treaty is of direct relevance to everyone in the EU, yet there has only been modest scrutiny of the treaty by national parliaments in member states. The treaty was signed in December 1995 without any debate in Parliament or in the media. However, as the Home Secretary appears intent on delaying the treaty's ratification, this rekindles the possibility of a debate on the floor of the House.

JONATHAN COOPE
Director of Law & Policy
Liberty (National Council
for Civil Liberties)
London SE1

Mary Taylor's 'other book'

Sir: Delighted as one would be to learn of the discovery of a hitherto unknown Brontë novel, I think it cannot be at the expense of depriving Charlotte Brontë's friend, Mary Taylor (1817-1893), of her own rights of authorship ("Miles away from the real Brontë", 20 May).

Miss Miles was published in 1890, probably at Taylor's own expense. We have references in her letters to Brontë to two books she was working on, a novel and "my other book". In 1852 she described her novel as "full of music, poetry, disputing, politics, and original views of life", a description which corresponds to the novel that finally emerged.

She confessed to difficulties in portraying male characters and indeed, her main concern is not with writing a romance, but with the character development and ultimate fates of three young heroines. There is neither the poetry nor the passion we encounter in Brontë's novels. In *Miss Miles* we have a well-



constructed novel, expressing in a good story. Mary Taylor's firm convictions of the need for women to work for their own independence.

Taylor was severely critical of Brontë's presentation of the women and work problem in *Shirley*, accusing her of cowardice and treachery to the women's cause.

She held radical views about women's rights and *Miss Miles* represents one of the media through which she expressed them. After five years spent researching Taylor's life and work I am convinced that she warrants a respected place in the history of the 19th-century women's movement and the literature, theory and fiction connected with it.

JOAN BELLAMY
Senior Visiting Research Fellow
The Open University
Milton Keynes

Time to protect the tsetse fly

Sir: Nicholas Schoon's thought-provoking article ("When it is right to destroy nature", 15 May) about why the survival of the unloved nail fungus is as important as the "charismatic" offer had me nodding in quiet agreement until he hit a raw nerve by suggesting it was fine to extinguish species like the tsetse fly because they cause disease in humans.

The tsetse fly exposes the appalling dilemma conservationists often find themselves in. Tsetse flies cause sleeping sickness in cattle and humans, and as a result are a great

friend of wildlife. If you go by air over the Okavango delta in Botswana, you can see an astonishingly clear line separating the tsetse areas – where wildlife, immune to sleeping sickness, thrives – from the tsetse eradication zones where cattle and humans have moved in and there is not an antelope or buffalo in sight.

SIMON LYSTER
Director General
Wildlife
London SW1

Sir: Nicholas Schoon says man has the right to eradicate what he calls "natural enemies" like the tsetse fly. There are thousands of animals and insects which have the capacity to harm or kill humans. Spiders, scorpions, sharks, crocodiles, lions, tigers, piranhas. They all have, and still do, kill humans. They can all be placed in Mr Schoon's classification "natural enemies". Should we destroy them too?

In an ideal world pest control schemes are desirable but experience says we must be careful when we play God. Man has despoiled many places by randomly using dangerous chemicals to kill pests. Should we swamp malarial areas with pesticide to kill off mosquitoes?

If Mr Schoon is right and we are only playing nature's game when we destroy our "natural enemies" there is no hope for the future. We exert such fearsome control over most of the planet that if we destroy everything that can harm or kill people we will mortally

wound the ecosystem upon which we all rely.

The way to save what is left of nature is to concentrate on what Mr Schoon scornfully describes as the "fluffy" animal approach to wildlife conservation. By supporting efforts to save rhinos, whales, elephants, and other "fluffy" species organisations are protecting vast ecosystems which contain thousands of other species. We should recognise the importance of "ugly" animals and insects, but at least by protecting the "fluffy" ones we are providing an umbrella for them all.

BILL BROWN
Protecting African Wildlife
St Helier, Jersey

Uninspired by Jerusalem

Sir: In his article on the Church of Scotland's rejection of the hymn based on William Blake's "Jerusalem", John Walsh seems to completely miss the point ("Bring no spear to Jerusalem", 18 May). His problem is illustrated very well by his anachronistic paragraph on Joseph of Arimathea.

If Joseph of Arimathea came to this part of the world, it was not England that he visited, but Britain, because "England" did not exist at that time. The Anglo-Saxons were still living in what is now Germany and did not invade Britain for another 500 years or so. Similarly any mention of the tales of the Holy Grail and King

Arthur in reference to "England" is extremely misleading. The tales of King Arthur originate in Welsh literature and indicate an early British Welsh king striving to keep his Anglo-Saxon English enemies out of the sacred island of Britain and to prevent them from creating "England".

Mr Walsh's ethnocentric English viewpoint seems to prevent him from realising that neither the Scottish nor Welsh soul is likely to feel very inspired by singing a hymn that excludes them by talking about England instead of Britain. The fact is that, through a use of words which is offensive to the other two nations of the island of Britain, the hymn is limited in its appeal.

R BEYNON
Swansea

Conservation for the millennium

Sir: Why not switch the focus of millennium funding towards conserving the buildings and sites, landscapes and townscapes that have played a significant part in shaping Britain's history and culture over the last thousand years or more, and celebrating their value in all manner of ways.

Many cathedrals for example require substantially increased funding if they are to survive to 3000AD, cope positively with the tourist explosion, and continue to delight and fascinate UK citizens.

People of all ages, and in all parts of the UK, could directly

participate. Well handled, an historical and evolutionary theme could help put the Great back into Britain entering a new millennium.

GRAHAM M LOMAS
Putney, Surrey

Sir: The Great Exhibition was designed by Joseph Paxton, the Festival of Britain by James Gardner. Both men were visionary, and in their own small way, geniuses.

I used to work for Gardner as a young designer; he used to impress on me that the world is divided into two types of "doers" and "talkers".

I suggest that the Millennium Commission (a lot of talkers who perhaps talk too much) hand the job over to Sir Richard Rogers and Sir Bob Scott and let them get on with it, otherwise, as you suggest (leading article, 19 May) nothing will happen.

ROBERT LETTS
Department of Architecture,
Landscape and 3D
Manchester Metropolitan
University

Sir: Who needs a state exhibition to celebrate the millennium? Most of us all be exhibiting and partying anyway.

Wouldn't the millennium be best celebrated if the proposed £400m was used to combat poverty and homelessness in the country? Then we could all go into the next century knowing that both public and private money had been used to redress social inequalities.

This would give us an even bigger justification to celebrate.

BANDU AMISA BRIGHT
London W11

Plagued by book prizes

Sir: If every established book prize should engender controversy, I suppose that the Committee on the Public Understanding of Science and the Science Museum should be grateful to Tom Wilkie (16 May) for his efforts to put the Rhone-Poulenc prize for Science Books in the Booker league, but he strains at a gnat.

Arno Karlen's *Plague's Progress* (to which the jury of which I was the chairman awarded this year's prize) and Laurie Garret's *The Coming Plague* do cover similar ground, but Karlen's is by far the better book, not least in being half the length.

Nor does Karlen follow Garret's recipe for leading drama to the text by beginning every other chapter with an account of a microbe-hunting hero in *extremis* in a hospital bed. More to the point (for a science book), many of Garret's explanations of the surge of novel infections in recent decades rely on tendentiously over-sharp arguments by the likes of Paul Ehrlich.

My own guess is that if Virago had nominated Garret, the jury would have only been confirmed in its belief that Karlen's book is at once a vivid and a balanced statement of an important issue which, in my judgement, Garret has over-written and overstated. Even so, it is a pity that Virago overlooked this year's competition.

Sir JOHN MADDOX
London W3

Sir: Tom Wilkie is entitled to his opinion of the relative merits of Arno Karlen's *Plague's Progress* and Laurie Garret's *The Coming Plague*. I'd like to point out, however, that *Plague's Progress* was praised by Oliver Sacks for its "combination of meticulous research and easy, natural writing", and by Roy Porter for its avoidance of hysteria, its clarity and completeness. I only wish Mr Wilkie had been equally assiduous in his avoidance of hysteria.

MIKE PETTY
Editorial Director
Victor Gollancz:
London, WC2

Victor Gollancz are the publishers of *Plague's Progress*

Jumbled up

Sir: Daniel Libeskind's design for an extension to the Victoria and Albert Museum (report, 17 May) seems to fall between two stools – is it a building or a sculpture? As architecture it does not display the order and beauty we expect. Perhaps the design is an attempt to illustrate chaos theory or the latest intellectual fad.

As a sculpture it is not aesthetically pleasing – all those dominating angles, rectangular forms, straight oblique lines and planes suggesting movement (unsettling in a building), emotional turmoil and aggression (very masculine), only relieved by hemisphere and cylinder (the breast and phallus?) and the circular shape of what appears to be the Albert Hall crushed at the side.

A museum is a place of tranquility and contemplation, primarily for the mind. It should welcome and not overwhelm. This design appears to be a jumble of children's building blocks of which the child has tired and knocked down. It is not suitable for a museum.

W K HARPER
Tunstall,
Stoke-On-Trent

the commentators

Requiem for a man with the wrong vowels

The ousting of Paul Gambaccini from Radio 3 is a victory for Middle England, writes Fiona Maddocks

Yes, I confess it. When Paul Gambaccini took over the 9am slot on Radio 3 last October I was aghast. Had my colleague Nicholas Kenyon (Controller of Radio 3), in all other respects unimpeachable, taken leave of his senses? As a listener, I could discern no logic in replacing solid, serious Composer of the Week, a mainstay of Radio 3's output, with yet another spin-a-CD sequence of music glued together with dollops of banal chat as it undoubtedly would be. Change, yes. But revolution like this? Surely a bit *outre* for Radio 3, ratings war or not.

With appalled fascination, I soon became a connoisseur of the Gambaccini style. In the first week, the choice of a daily "Tone Poem" stirred a shudder of disbelief – this, on Radio 3. A *Tone Poem!* Would no one tell him that in English we spell it Poem? Alas, poor Lord Reith and all other benchmarks of seriousness, moral decency and what you will. While not quite for hanging or stoning, I was ready to hurl at this beleaguered American disc jockey one of the blamemongers in which he seemed determined we should wallow each morning.

Now, we learn, he is being dropped. In a complete turnaround, I find myself regretting his departure. An impeccably presented of *Kaleidoscope*, clever and cultivated, Gambaccini had at first sounded ill-at-ease in his Radio 3 seat. Yet, over the months, his programme has come into its own, helped, it is true, by an increase in music and a decrease in chat. His choice of repertoire is bold and exploratory, with a major work – yesterday a Brahms piano quartet – in each programme. Gone are the cloying personal observations of early days ("I once had a piano ... lingers in the mind"), replaced by pithy, well-written scripts redolent of the days when Radio 3 had a department devoted to such things. Significantly, his production company, Merton, consists in part of former Radio 3 staff. But finally, his sweet American tones have proved a turn-off – for everyone but me. He's just not a Radio 3 man.

His demise is heralded as a victory for the voice of Middle England, represented here, atypically, by Gerald Kaufman, the writer is the editor of 'BBC Music Magazine'.

Labour's very own poverty trap

The party's latest spat over welfare and the poor exposes the damaging lack of a coherent policy

Anyone who wishes Labour well and has high hopes for a Blair government – an increasing band of people – should be deeply alarmed about the latest spat between Michael Meacher and the party hierarchy about poverty and welfare. This wasn't a personality-driven tiff. It was a disagreement which goes to the heart of Labour's purpose. And what it showed was that after years of agonising and debate, and perhaps only months from taking office, the party is nowhere near a consensus.

We have had Gordon Borrie's Commission on Social Justice. We have had Donald Dewar's rethinking of policy. We have had repeated radical critiques from Frank Field, the backbench crusader. We have had cautious, careful speeches from Gordon Brown. We have had more than a whiff of the modish new moralism from Tony Blair and Jack Straw. We have had a fierce private defence of core Labour positions from Chris Smith and a public speech to the same effect from Robin Cook.

We have had pamphlets by the score from think-tanks; ground-breaking visits to Washington; unreadable articles in clever magazines. But what we haven't had, and apparently don't have, is a coherent and agreed policy for the poor from Labour, which once gloried in its role as the party of "the bottom dog".

The traditional welfare argument could be caricatured as a disagreement between the left, who saw poverty and unemployment as being basically the fault of the capitalist state, and the right, who saw it as basically the fault of feckless and idle individuals. For

most of the post-war era, the left's morality held sway. Conservative governments here and Republican administrations in the US – including, notably, Richard Nixon's – built and sustained relatively generous welfare systems. This would not have been possible without two things: strong economic growth to fund them, and a particular political ethic to explain them.

For the poor, the bad news is that both are under threat. The long Western boom of post-war times is unlikely to recur; and if it did, ageing populations and more expensive treatments mean welfare states would swallow even more of taxpayers' wealth than they do now. Though Britain could fund today's welfare state from higher taxes, without indulging in radical reform, today's welfare state isn't very good.

At the same time, that particular political ethic which created welfarism has been unravelling. That ethic was a peculiar mixture of guilt and hubris – guilt about the failings of capitalism, and the political pride that believed action could cure everything short of old age and the common cold.

The shift in thinking is happening not because of a savage crusade by followers of Hayek, but because memories of the two big events of mid-century have faded. The Depression provided the political push for welfarism. From that came the guilt. The Second World War demonstrated the organisational power of modern states; and that reinforced the hubris.

But human memories are short and without a lively recall of those events, the welfare ethic is weakened. The weakening is coming at a time when the West faces fierce competition from Asian countries, some of whom have much less developed welfare systems than ours, and when global competition is accelerating. Both politics and economics are driving the ideological shift which says, "blame a little more, understand a little less".

All this may seem a long way from the current struggles over Labour's thinking on the welfare state, and longer still from the daily lives of Britain's unemployed and poor. But it isn't. Labour's welfare dilemmas are directly connected to these big shifts in world power and political thought.

Let us take, just for starters, the two dilemmas that have caused the Labour party hierarchy particular angst in recent weeks. At first sight, Gordon Brown's proposal to remove child benefit from 16- to 18-year-olds and substitute new training projects has little to do with the subject of the Michael Meacher furore, the Jobseekers' Allowance, which replaces

unemployment benefit from October.

Meacher – or rather, we are told, his research assistant – said that Labour would scrap the Jobseekers' Allowance, which runs for only six months rather than the year of unemployment benefit. This would cost Labour £240m a year. Gordon Brown was cross, at least inwardly. Mr Meacher was penitent, at least outwardly.

These subjects aren't simple. One could argue that in suggesting taking child benefit from wealthier families, as well as poorer ones, and targeting the money on training for the less well-off, Brown was being more redistributive than his left-wing critics. Alternatively, because cutting the amount of time unemployment benefit is paid drives people more quickly into the poverty trap, you could argue that Meacher (sorry, Meacher's researcher) was being more of a moderniser than Brown and Blair.

But in both cases, the question is the same – whether or not to go from a universal benefit (a staple of post-war welfare policy) towards a more closely targeted form of welfare, intended to change people's behaviour. Child benefit and unemployment benefit are part of the previous consensus. Training programmes, with an element of financial compulsion, and the tougher Jobseekers' Allowance are very definitely not.

The other unresolved big policy issue affecting poorer voters is help in old age. Labour attacks the current pathetic level of the state pension, caused by breaking its old link with earnings. But it won't restore the link, because that would be too expensive. It has toyed with the idea of a national minimum pension, rather like the

basic minimum wage. But again, it has not moved towards an actual, ink-on-paper commitment. On long-term care, in just the same way, Labour attacks the Conservatives but without a clear alternative plan of its own.

Granted, it is very hard to plan rationally and explain yourself if you can never, ever discuss extra state spending. Brown's decree is politically rational, given what Conservative Central Office has done in the past to Labour manifestos. But it produces a skewed, purblind view of welfare policy.

But the basic trouble is philosophical and moral, not about the short-term politics of taxation. If one can imagine a slope that stretches from pure statist compassion to the ultimate right-wing self-help of the kind being tried by Democrats in the US, Labour has no idea where to place itself.

Tony Blair himself is a moralist who believes in self-improvement and buys some, at least, of the argument about state dependency. But he is much exercised by the age of anxiety caused by globalism. And you can hardly blame the idle poor for financial deregulation, even if you are the very newest of new Labour.

So there is, to put it mildly, a bit of work for Blair's team to do in explaining its attitude to poverty. This is not a matter that should be on the edge of the agenda, only propelled into the mainstream because of rows over articles written by researchers in *Red Paper*. And it is worrying that Labour, after thinking for so long, is still so far from coherence or conclusion. It is time for the Shadow Cabinet room to echo with the sound of heads being knocked together.

Infectious illness is spreading, but talk of a diseased society carries added dangers, says David Bodanis

A sick metaphor plagues us

The latest World Health Organisation report on the spread of infectious diseases started sensibly enough, describing the resurgence of tuberculosis and diphtheria and other traditional diseases; the appearance of new infections such as the Ebola virus, too. But then Dr Hiroshi Nakajima, the director-general, began to get excited. "We ... stand on the brink of a global crisis in infectious diseases. No country is safe from them, no country can any longer afford to ignore their threat."

The report goes on emphasising the dangers for Africa and poor countries generally, and suddenly it's clear that we're in the world of the infection metaphor again; the longstanding and powerful image, where dangerous spreading entities are on the loose. Not just microbial ones. Oh no, those are just the barest visible signs. There is something deeper, some sort of political danger: a social danger: an attack from without, by tiny threatening objects, which – unless blocked – will gush in and undermine and destroy us.

Louis Pasteur helped to consolidate this idea in its modern form. He strongly detested and feared microbes. One of the sole surviving accounts of dinner at his home described the mortified silence of his wife and guests as the great man peered close at all the glasses and empty plates to locate any possible intruder. Pasteur equally detested the urban mob.

The mob was also a collection of potentially infectious creatures that decent people couldn't ordinarily see, but which was always there, ready to pounce, to subvert our inner structure, have us collapse in disorder and turn us into – the worst of all possible fates – a thing no different from the seething mass that had attacked.

Rather than being just an individual quirk, which Pasteur's guests could nod at, smiling politely, waiting until he had stopped his harangue, and then they could get on with dinner, this idea of the infectious masses quickly resonated in society. Europe was changing, fast, through invisible forces that



Post-war screening for tuberculosis: the horror of bacteria is similar to fear of the mob

tious diseases, Aids, which could directly affect wealthy Westerners, comes about fifth; the higher ones were pneumonia and dysentery and their like, which are unlikely to affect us directly.

Dr Nakajima's warning against the threat of infectious disease closely parallels phrasing about the threat from Africa and Third World immigrants. Here, too, every nation is generally described as being at risk; here, too, only the right defensive measures, taken early, can keep us protected. For microbes it will be labs, international surveillance, hygiene controls. For immigration it will be similar computer checks, passports, tougher borders.

It is distressing how unchanged the terms are over the years. George Kennan, in his original article proposing the containment policy against Communism, describes the danger in terms Pasteur would have recognised: "We have seen that Soviet power is only a crust concealing an amorphous mass of human beings."

In the generally liberal *Atlantic* magazine recently, a half-century later, Robert Kaplan was similarly horrified: "In cities in six West African countries I saw similar young men everywhere – hordes of them. They were like loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid, a fluid that was clearly on the verge of igniting."

What would have happened if actual bacteria didn't exist on our planet, or hadn't been discovered. Would our view of each other as potential bursting-out swarms have been so common? It's impossible to tell.

Perhaps the infection metaphor will continue whenever otherwise inexplicable social changes are taking place. Certainly its utter flexibility helps. How else could Iranian mullahs declare that satellite dishes must be banned to keep out the infection of Western ideas, just as the mayor of a Paris suburb decided that his district's satellite dishes must be outlawed to protect it from the virus of Islamic fundamentalism?

The writer lectures in social theory at Oxford University.

£10 BUYS A CHAIN CUTTER

He's chained up through his sensitive nose and made to time on red hot plates, whilst the hock of his legs are left in time. Onlookers taunt him and force him to drink beer. Why? Because they're teaching him to 'dance' for tourists who pay to watch his agonising waltz.

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) rescues 'dancing bears' and takes them to sanctuaries where they can be free of pain and suffering. But we can't carry out our life-saving work without the support of people like you. Your gift of just £10, or whatever you can afford, will help cut the chains of innocent animals. So please, send your donation today. He's counting on you.

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Please send this completed form and your donation to: WSPA, Dept AL20, Freepost MH2604, Northampton, NN3 6BR. No stamp is needed. THANK YOU. Registered Charity No. 282508

Americans top the league table for libido, but would they share their jumper with you? Glenda Cooper on what women want

I'd rather have a British man any day

What do women want? asked Sigmund Freud all those years ago. According to Durex, they want a lot, but not a British male. The cheek of it. In an international league table the British male has been placed as the last choice for a lover by all our European neighbours. Ten thousand people in 15 countries were polled by Durex – and none longer to sleep with British men despite their long experience (average age of losing virginity is 16.7 years) and their reputation for safe sex (third best in the world).

It's enough to make you sympathetic with the Euro-sceptics. The British have always had a great tradition of

love. What's a few Casanovas and Julio Iglesias next to the centuries-old tradition? There was Byron, who had everyone in the Regency period, including Lady Caroline Lamb and his own sister. Rochester, who makes today's writers of smut look like Enid Blyton; James Boswell, biographer of Samuel Johnson, who prowled the Embankment with onion-skin contraceptives at the ready ... need I say more in defence of the British lover?

Of course, such marathon runners don't necessarily make great lovers.

You'd think twice about including Henry VIII, who had an unpleasant way of ending affairs on the scaffold – but British men today have got over this macho do about nothing. The Durex survey found that the British were the most considerate lovers. Time for less Don Juan and more Fitzwilliam Darcy.

This is what women want rather than the Stud-u-Likes from the so-called sexual superpowers, the US and Russia. (The average annual rate for Russians was 135 times and for Americans 133). Thought we'd got over

notches on the bedpost some time in the 1970s, but never mind.

Who could ever fail to fall for the British modesty and understatement, the simplicity of approach ("You dance?" "You askin'?"

The originality of thought (why have a boring candlelight dinner when you could take her to see Norwich City?) and the willingness to share Marks & Spencer jumpers. Paris, Milan and New York are passe and overdone when you consider the uncharted territories of Leicester train station, Surbiton shop-

ping centre or Great Yarmouth pier (complete with funfair) for romantic encounters. And there's something very refreshing about the British male's complete lack of physical vanity – you may not love her bellies but at least he's more interested in your body than showing off his.

British men are the best. And anyone who thinks Italians are the greatest lovers is in for a shock: a seduction school has just opened in Naples. Pupils pay £150 for lessons in wooing. Before getting their diplomas, would-be Romeo's have to charm a 14-year-old into bed.

Do you want to be seen with a man like that? I rest my case.

Glenda Cooper

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Frank Johnson: editor of the 'Spectator', former sketch writer of the 'Times' and columnist with the 'Daily Telegraph'.

Photograph: Herbie Knott



Boris Johnson: former Brussels correspondent for the 'Daily Telegraph', hate-figure of the European Commission and now Tory candidate.

Photograph: Colin McMillan



Paul Johnson: commentator for the 'Daily Mail', prodigious writer of 'why-oh-why' features and a former leftist.

Photograph: Tom Pilston

Try creative cursing: experts swear by it

Professor Roland Bumper, you are an expert in road rage, are you not?"

"Well, I am professor of Automobile Behaviour Studies at Milton Keynes, if that's what you mean."

"Does that mean you are an expert in road rage?"

"Oh, yes. But I am also an expert in speeding disorders, compulsive car cleaning, car theft syndrome, back seat magic mania and many other car-connected behavioural tendencies."

"I see."

"So I am not limited just to road rage."

"What I am trying to say is that any time you want to get a car-driver expert to talk about anything, I'm your man. I'm always available on my mobile and I can get to the studio as quickly as you like."

"By car?"

"If necessary. I prefer to go by train."

"Is it quicker by train?"

"Not necessarily. But people on trains behave much better and more nicely. Ask any professor of automobile studies. So it's a much more

pleasant experience. No rail rage on a train."

"But there is rage in a car?"

"Certainly. That's why you asked me here today, for this interview."

"So I did. Well, tell me, professor - why do people get road rage? Is it because some other road-user breaks the Highway Code?"

"No. It's because some sodding bastard is driving like an effing madman."

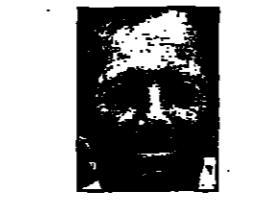
"I beg your pardon?"

"That's the language of road rage. Cursing, swearing and blaspheming. Not for the road rager the Queen's English. You do not hear him saying, 'Dear me, that driver is in danger of making me late for my appointment - I do so hope he manages to get through the lights before they turn red again this time!'

"Ah, no, the man who suffers from road rage slips immediately into the 10 or 12 words available to the maddened Englishman."

"Ten or 12?"

"Well, possibly not as many as 10 or 12. The English repertoire of four-letter words is so meagre as to



Miles Kington

beggar description. We now think that this may in fact be the cause of road rage."

"The panacy of swear words in English?"

"Indeed. We have found that in countries where they have greater fluency in swearing and cursing, there is less violence. The more chance you have to excommunicate each other, the less likely we manage to get through the lights before they turn red again this time!"

"I'm glad you noticed that. It's a long word I like to slip into interviews. It means to flay, both physically and verbally. Slipping long words into insults also helps to ward off road rage, by the way."

"Does it?"

"Sure. We have done a series of controlled experi-

ments at Milton Keynes in road rage simulation. We have tried letting people shout at each other normally, we have tried coaching them in their range of insults and we have tried teaching them new, artificial swear words."

"Such as?"

"'Prap. Clint. Flaker. Jeez-icle. Falkirk. Fastnet...'"

"Hmmm. And what happened?"

"Almost without exception we found that the wider the vocabulary, the less chance of coming to blows. If two men - and it is always men who get road rage, for reasons that we needn't go into here, but are something to do with the fact that women are nicer than men - if two men blow off steam at each other, and can continue to blow off steam, they will subside. It is the frustration of not being able to think of another insult that drives people to violence."

"So what you are saying is that..."

"What I am saying is that the Government must embark on a major new programme."

"Of road building, you mean?"

"Fine."

"No - that's useless. Of insult training."

"The Government must train drivers how to insult each other."

"Sure. Once you introduce fluency into drivers' language, once you get the creative juices flowing, violence will shrink."

"Shrinking violence, eh?"

"That's about it. We have found in our experiments that once people appreciate the sheer exhilaration of insulting each other creatively, they are loth to give it up for taking a few swings at each other. English road rage is linked directly to shortcomings in the English language."

"But where on earth will one find a course designed to get people to swear more creatively?"

"Well, by sheer chance we have just set up such a course at Milton Keynes."

"So if the Government rings up after this programme to get in touch with you, we can give them your number?"

"Why don't I just stick around and wait for the call?"

"Fine."

polemic

These are the Johnson Brothers. They hate Europe, will ruin the Tory party and hand power to Tony Blair

By Julian Critchley

The deselection of Sir George Gardiner, one-time chairman of the right-wing 1992 Committee would be welcomed by many in the Tory party. A conspiratorial figure, for ever to be seen haunting the passages of Westminster, seeking the election of his friends to the office of some party committee, he does tend to look the part. Lugubrious as well as conspiratorial, Sir George has been a pillar of the right for as long as I can recall.

His constituency association has passed by 15 votes to 14 a resolution that seeks to invite others to come before a selection committee; Sir George's response has been to threaten to apply to the Chiltern Hundreds (the parliamentary terminology for resigning), thus, in theory at least, cutting the Government's majority by two, as Labour would be expected to win any by-election.

It is all bluff, of course. An MP who applies for the Chiltern Hundreds loses his "golden handshake" of a year's salary, that is £34,000 (£20,000 of which is tax free). And there is every possibility of MPs' salaries rising as a result of a Commons committee to report in July, which would result in Sir George, who is not a rich man, losing more than £40,000 after tax. I suggest his bluff be called and a new, moderate candidate told me he does not believe in "witch-hunts".

And they are not alone in promoting the agenda of the far right. Jeremy Dacres, late of the "old" Telegraph, has pointed out that the Daily Mail, under the editorship of Paul Dacre, has become "increasingly nasty". Mr Murdoch wanted Mr Dacre to edit the Times; instead, Mr Dacre has Murdochised the Mail.

The Express, which, under the ownership of Lords Stevens and Hollick (Labour peer), has lost out to the Mail in the circulation battle, has become every bit as hostile to Britain in Europe as are its rivals.

Much of the Conservative Party's disorientation can be ascribed to our hard-right newspapers. The Conservative press in Britain has usually been well to the right of Conservative governments. Think, for example, of Beaverbrook's failed pre-war crusades. But the Conservative governments before the accession of Good Queen Margaret in 1979 were far less right-wing than those since, and there were countervailing forces against the right both in and outside the party.

Nowadays, the Conservative press, largely foreign-owned, trumpets home and foreign policies fully suited to North American ideas and conditions but discordant to those of Britain and Europe.

That the hostile press campaign against the European Union should be led by our foreign-owned newspapers is only superficially paradoxical. As we should all know, the nation-state has grown ever weaker against global market forces

in our time.

Conrad Black's papers are all "upmarket", their readership traditionally Tory. Mr Murdoch's arsenal of hate incorporates two barrels; the Times and the Sunday Times, and the "soar-away" Sun, which the working classes use to wrap their Spanish fish and Irish chips. Under the heading "The Sun says", that paper's leader writer wrote on 9 May: "In our

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23 years in the EU [wrong, the EU is a recent development], we have tipped £30bn into the coffers of Brussels".

Note the use of the word "coffers", as if the money, which of course, look no account of sums received in return, was lining the pockets of Leon Brittan and Neil Kinnock.

The editorial went on: "We have had to stand by helplessly as Europe destroys our fishing industry [incorrect, over-fishing has done more harm than any European commissioner], and threatens to do the same to our beef farmers and butchers."

How much of the BSE scare has been got up by the press?" That question is never addressed.

The writer, sucking pensively

"There should be a competition for a flag to suit the Europe of today. A tricolour of suitably straight sausage, cucumber and banana?" This extravagance might well have raised the flicker of a smile, but it perpetuates deliberately three "Euro myths" - the straight sausage, cucumber and banana - which have no basis whatsoever in truth.

A Gary Bushell, sometime television critic who also describes himself as the Sun's Brussels correspondent, with the sub-heading "Flies the flag for Britain" besides Union flag, asked: "How should we celebrate Europe Day?" Fancy tucking into a few garlic snails, washed down with German plonk as we sing Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" under the banner of President Jacques Santer's European Union ...?"

This is the voice of the new nationalism, anti-French, anti-German, anti-foreign and anti-culture. He would have been more to the point had he mentioned the tastelessness of Dutch tomatoes.

The anti-Europe campaign of the British Tory press has greatly encouraged the least attractive elements within the Conservative Party, namely Michael "El Cid" Portillo, who believes foreign students buy their educational qualifications, and who proclaims at Tory party conferences that "Britain will not fight for Brussels" if he has been asked to do so. He is a loose cannon who has been overtaken by John Redwood with his shifty smile and his contentious pamphlets.

"Norman Tebbit's bile can be traced back to Brighton: Norman Lamont (if only someone has blacked the other eye) has no such excuse. He is motivated solely by pique."

And then there are the others, the small fry. The black-

and-white Teresa Gorman, the horning Bill Cash and Christopher Gill, the Shropshire meat pie. A master butcher, he has been silent over BSE.

The fact that the Euro-sceptics number nearly 70 has done almost as much harm by their expression of disunity to the electoral politics of the Tories as has the constant campaign of denigration waged against John Major, for no apparent reason than he is a decent chap. The two Telegraphs must hear much of the responsibility for the very real possibility of a Tony Blair's England.

Mr Major is not the only villain. Chancellor Kohl has been made a target of every hack who can carry a pen. Perhaps the worst example of the new obscurantism, however, was a recent editorial attacking Mr Major personally in the Daily Telegraph. Among the list of his sins and failings was the extraordinary assertion that he was responsible for our current "anti-monarchical culture".

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Instant results for Railtrack Sids

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Thousands of private investors yesterday sold their Railtrack shares for an instant profit averaging around £100, during hectic dealings which accounted for more than a fifth of stock market volume.

The shares rose at one stage 40p above the part-paid retail price of 190p, and closed 30.5p up at 220.5p, a 16 per cent premium on the 190p a share paid by private investors.

After heavy oversubscription by institutions and retail investors, the success of the offer on the first day of trading was welcomed with delight by the Government but scorned by the opposition.

Clare Short, Sir George's Labour shadow, repeated her threat that a Labour government would move to tighten railway regulation, adding "We have said this will not be a gravy train. There will not be the big, fat instant profits at public expense that there have been in other privatisations."

At a typical sale price during the day of 220p, holders of the minimum of 200 shares would have made a profit of about £57 after dealing expenses of £7.50, said The Share Centre, one of the share shops handling the issue.

An average holder of Railtrack awarded 350 shares would have made £105 profit after the same dealing expenses, on an investment of £665. On a fully paid basis, Railtrack's paper assets have risen £130m above the float price to more than £1bn.

Robert Horton, chairman of Railtrack, said he was not surprised that some small investors had staged the issue, by buying it sell immediately.

"We have the basis of a loyal shareholding once the fuss and bother has died down, and that is the important thing," he said.

Mr Horton added he was delighted that 90 per cent of the staff had taken up the shares made available to them, and he pledged that the privatisation would soon deliver benefits to customers.

"There is no conflict between the interests of shareholders and of the travelling public," he claimed.

Mr Horton said that the public would soon see improvements because since 10 December last year Railtrack had been operating a thousand electronic clocks around the country measuring the performance of trains - and putting a price on delays.

This might price a minute's delay in the rush hour at Waterloo at £150 but on an obscure branch line at only £10. The technology allowed Railtrack and the train operators to decide in "real time" - during the 8 hour shifts in which the delays were happening - whose fault it was and how to apportion the costs.

The result was a formidable database for Railtrack on where the most costly delays were to be found, said Mr Horton. This in turn would focus capital spending and asset maintenance where it would have the maximum effect. "If a particular set of points is costing thousands a week then we know to get someone down there to get it sorted out," added Mr Horton.

The surge in the share price came as City institutions, which had seen their allocations cut back to make way for private investors, bought heavily in the



Offer closes: Ian Dudman, crossing keeper at Ely railway station, Essex

Photograph: Brian Harris

market to make up their holdings.

With Railtrack volume at 167m - 22 per cent of the market - the total number of shares traded was 83 million, or 16 per

cent of the number the Government sold.

The issue was heavily oversubscribed, with at least £1.2bn cash chasing £1.9bn of shares, allowing the Government to sell

at 390p a share, the top of its promised price range. Institutions paid 200p for the first instalment and were seeing a premium of 10 per cent at the close.

About 9 per cent of successful applicants staged the issue, said Gavin Oldham, chief executive of The Share Centre.

Sir George Young, the transport secretary, disclosed last

night that the Government was to receive £1.67bn from the sale so far, though the total for the company is £1.93bn when over-allotment options held by Warburg are included.

BA sets profits target of £1bn

MICHAEL HARRISON

British Airways has set itself the ambitious target of increasing profits to more than £1bn a year by the end of the decade, reinforcing its position as the world's most efficient and profitable airline.

Announcing record pre-tax profits last year of £585m and a £94m bonus for staff - one of the biggest paid by a UK company - BA's chairman, Sir Colin Marshall, said every aspect of the group's operations would be reviewed.

The huge improvement in business efficiency, he added, would be achieved through further cost reductions, improved use of assets and revenue-enhancing initiatives.

Sir Colin said that over the next three years BA aimed to achieve business efficiencies worth £1bn on top of the £900m of savings made in the last five years.

BA's finance director, Derek Stevens, indicated that up to £600m of this improvement could feed straight through to the bottom line - pushing BA's profits well above the £1bn mark by the beginning of the next century.

The unveiling of the plan was marred, however, by an announcement that BA's pilots are to hold a strike ballot in protest over a two-year pay deal on offer from the airline.

BA's chief executive, Robert Ayling, maintained that the pay offer - worth 3.7 per cent in the first year and inflation plus 0.5 per cent in year two - was a "very attractive" one and had already been accepted by the airline's 20,000 ground staff.

He added that the staff bonus - worth a minimum of £1.210 for junior employees and up to £5,000-£6,000 for pilots - would be paid irrespective of whether there was a vote for strike action.

Sir Colin would not specify

exactly how the challenging efficiency target would be met and how much would come from cost-cutting. However, he said achieving competitive unit costs would be an important part of the programme.

Nor would he respond to reports that BA is on the verge of sealing a transatlantic tie-up with American Airlines, possibly involving the two carriers taking cross-shareholdings in one another.

"We continue to believe that a further round of consolidation within the US airline industry is likely to occur. What, when and how I cannot say. We will, however, be watching the situation closely to see what implications there could be for our US investment and for British Airways itself."

BA has a 24.6 per cent stake in USAir, which it acquired four years ago for £250m. Both American and United Airlines held discussions last year about acquiring USAir - a deal that could have led to a new and bigger alliance with BA but the talks broke down.

Although BA has written down the value of its stake in USAir by a half, the airline is making an increasing contribution to the group's bottom line.

Last year BA's global alliance partners, including franchise airlines, contributed £150m profit.

USAir contributed £80m in additional revenues and cost-sharing benefits. Qantas, the Australian airline, in which BA has a 25 per cent stake, also chipped in about £80m, while BA made about £20m from franchising its name to other airlines.

Losses from its two European associates - TAT of France and Deutsche BA - were also cut from £90m to £68m, despite a strengthening of the franc and the German mark.

Comment, page 17

Oil sector falls as Iraq strikes UN deal

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Oil shares were marked down sharply yesterday after Iraq rejected United Nations plan that would allow it to sell oil for the first time since 1990.

Anticipation of a successful

agreement, which is likely to see an extra 600,000 to 700,000 barrels come on to the market within a few weeks, saw the oil price fall by up to \$1-a-barrel during the day, dragging down stock market prices with it.

The exploration sector was

hardest hit, with Lasmo falling 6.5p to 176.5p and Enterprise dipping 5p to 460p. BP was off 5p to 569.5p, but Shell, less dependent on upstream exploration and production earnings, bore up well, losing just 3p at 926.5p.

The deal will allow Iraq to raise \$2bn for humanitarian aid by selling oil over a six month period. It comes after four years of on-off negotiations between Baghdad and the UN on how to help ease the hardships caused by an oil embargo

the UN imposed in 1990 after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

The long haggling had convinced some industry observers that an agreement would not be reached, but the threat has been overhanging the oil price and analysts said yesterday it had largely discounted the deal.

"It's been a long painful delivery, but the signs have been quite a long time that it would happen. It seems to have been factored into the crude price already," said one analyst.

The price of North Sea Brent

oil fell by up to \$1 a barrel in London trading yesterday, with August futures closing at around \$17. In the last few days, Brent has fallen from well above \$19.

A recent study by the Energy Information Administration, part of the US Government, suggested that the addition of 700,000 barrels of oil to world supplies would result in a cut of \$3- to \$4-a-barrel in the price. That prompted one analyst to suggest the price could go down as low as \$16.

Brent crude



Currency pressure 'grows on UK'

JOHN EISENHAMMER

Financial Editor

The political pressures on Britain to take part in European monetary union have risen markedly in recent months, Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, told MPs

yesterday. "The financial markets have been pushed to one side," Mr George said in evidence before the Treasury Select Committee, noting the apparent determination of a number of key governments to meet the 1999 deadline for a common currency than a year ago."

The Governor emphasised the political dynamic of the decision-making process because, in his view, the chances of key countries achieving the convergence criteria in time had become "more doubtful than a year ago".

Mr George was re-appearing before the select committee in part to correct what he regarded as a Euro-sceptical mis-interpretation of his EMU evidence on 8 May.

Instead, Mr George placed himself firmly in the pragmatist camp, lining up alongside Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor. He said he did not take an adverse view of European monetary union, but had become more doubtful about the ability of countries to fulfil, on time, criteria on inflation, public spending and national debt.

"I was disappointed with the way in which it [my previous evidence] was reported. I am not commenting on an adverse way on the merits of the project," he told the MPs.

"I believe that it may help to achieve the kind of stability which I think is fundamentally the most important issue here. And I think that stability is achieved on a sustainable basis, encapsulating that in a single currency then becomes a plausible, sensible approach."

"All I have said is in talking

about having become more doubtful is I am more doubtful as to whether the convergence criteria can be achieved according to the Maastricht timetable."

"I am more doubtful now than I was a year ago [because of] the softening of economic activity on the continent of Europe. I think that is an extremely unhelpful environment for actually achieving the convergence criteria to the current timetable."

He also said that he believed that if the UK remained outside EMU, such a move would not damage the financial activities of the City of London. The UK would not be treated like a pariah if it chose not to join a common currency, he said.

The Governor lent his weight to the argument in favour of making the Bank of England independent, whether or not Britain decided to join EMU.

The Governor said that what really mattered for Britain was the ability consistently to deliver a stable economic environment "in any circumstance in or out of EMU" with or without an independent central bank.

The Governor lent his weight to the argument in favour of making the Bank of England independent, whether or not Britain decided to join EMU.

Insider trading blitz planned

Exchange lobbies for changes that would introduce fuzzy software spy

JOHN EISENHAMMER

Financial Editor

The London Stock Exchange is urgently lobbying for a change in the law to make it easier to prosecute insider trading. Pressure on government and other regulators to make insider dealing a civil offence has been stepped up ahead of the introduction of artificial intelligence technology which the Stock Exchange hopes will dramatically improve its detection of market manipulation.

The Exchange is concerned that the usefulness of much sharper detection methods will be blunted by the inability of those carrying out subsequent investigation and prosecution to actually achieving the convergence criteria to the current timetable.

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He also said that he believed that if the UK remained outside EMU, such a move would not damage the financial activities of the City of London. The UK would not be treated like a pariah if it chose not to join a common currency, he said.

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BA reveals bold ambitions, but realistic ones

'In the last five years BA has carved £900m out of its cost base without any adverse impact on service. At the same time the main airline has achieved remarkable organic growth while also managing to bolt on new capacity'

Has Sir Colin Marshall been at the aviation fuel again or what? Profits doubled by the turn of the century? Scope for £1bn worth of efficiency gains? What does the man think he's running, a privatised utility?

The sceptics will no doubt pour scorn on the impressive and admittedly ambitious efficiency programme set out yesterday by British Airways. And indeed an element of caution probably is appropriate. There are few industries more cyclical than air travel and there are few businesses more prone than airlines to being blown completely off course by extraneous influences such as moustachioed Middle Eastern tyrants.

But the proof is, as they say, in the pudding. In the last five years BA has carved £900m out of its cost base without any adverse impact on service. At the same time the main airline has achieved remarkable organic growth while also managing to bolt on new capacity in the shape of Qantas, USAir and a pair of regional European airlines.

Not all of this has fed through to the bottom line by any means because of the curious economics that dictate airline performance. To stay at the top of the heap BA has had to invest massively. Making more seats available, particularly if they are to far-flung parts of the globe, can hurt yields in the short term because the further a passenger flies the less an airline makes out of them per mile.

But if any airline is capable of delivering

then it is BA. It possesses a priceless asset in the shape of a third of all the take-off and landing slots at Heathrow, the world's busiest international airport. For that reason the rest of the world airline industry is constantly knocking on its door. Provided the anti-trust objections can be overcome, BA might be about to secure a transatlantic alliance of mouth-watering possibilities with the last of the great unclubbable carriers – Bob Crandall's American Airlines.

Some passengers, however, are hard to please. The market took one look at BA's grand vision – alongside a set of record pre-tax profits – and reacted as if it had just found a cockroach hidden under the creme brulee. That is a pity because, if nothing else, Sir Colin is doing what the fund managers would surely want of him – setting targets against which the company's performance and that of its management can be tested and demonstrating by similar means how well it has so far done. More companies should be following BA's lead.

This season's fashion: the share buy-back

From Barclays to Safeway, PowerGen to Reuters and Guinness, share buy-backs and whacking great special dividends seems to be all the rage. If you cannot think of anything worthwhile to do with your money, give it back to shareholders, seems to be the lat-

est corporate mantra. Among the utilities it has a special plausibility, for if the company cannot think of proper uses for its money, the regulator sure as hell will: he'll take it away from you.

Is there anything wrong with the craze? Certainly it is possible to see it as a symptom of unimaginative and unadventurous management. Outside the Anglo-Saxon world it is virtually unheard of for companies to pay back their capital; somehow or other, Continental and Japanese companies always seem to find a use for it. Despite Britain's new low-inflation environment, British businessmen still seem to require impossibly demanding returns from any commercial investment. Their failure to invest on a scale necessary even to ensure existing capacity is updated is a real cause for concern.

But there is an alternative and more benign way of looking at the phenomenon.

To begin with, it tends to be confined to cash-rich sectors. There has yet to be a buy-back in the manufacturing industries so often accused of under-investing. Moreover, share buy-backs and special dividends are, in essence, rights issues in reverse. For years, the tendency among British companies was to raise money on the stock market just to pay it back in dividends, or worse still, as happened in the case of Barclays in the late 1980s, to blow it on profligate and costly expansion.

Seen in this light, the share buy-back is a

healthy development, ensuring that companies focus themselves and their capital on the things they do best. If the markets are doing what they are supposed to, the excess capital gets redistributed, ultimately finding its way into better and more deserving investment opportunities. Enterprise, innovation and proper commercial investment, far from being damaged by the buy-back, all get to benefit from it.

There is no denying the size of the phenomenon. Taken together with the very substantial number of cash takeovers of the last few years, there has been a sizeable transfer of cash from the corporate to the institutional sector. The amount of capital being taken out has exceeded the amount being raised. It will not always be thus, however. The corporate sector as a whole turned cash-rich towards the end of last year. As a result, the trend could soon be reversed: the amount of capital being sought might exceed that being paid back. We can but trust that once the begging bowl does come out again, the institutions will be there and ready to help. The City can expect little mercy from Labour if they are not.

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What do you mean that's less than it cost to build just one of these stretched stations? With a bit of luck Labour will soon be kicking up a fuss – family plutonium being flogged off on the cheap and all that. Nothing better than a bargain, is there?

Time to flog off the family plutonium

Think of the most mistrusted industry in the land and privatise it. Slice the odd billion or two off its debt and write the as-

OECD applies axe to growth forecasts

DIANE COYLE

Paris

Growth in the industrial countries this year and next will be far lower than the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development forecast as recently as December, the Paris-based think-tank admitted yesterday.

The OECD also predicts almost no change in high European unemployment levels of above 10 per cent during the next two years.

The substantially more pessimistic forecasts for the world's industrialised economies do not take account of further planned cuts in public spending by France and Germany in their efforts to qualify for the European single currency.

Their bid to meet the Maastricht criteria poses the risk of an even weaker outlook, according to the OECD's secretary general, Jean-Claude Paye.

France and Germany would not meet the Maastricht requirement of a government deficit below 3 per cent of GDP without further planned budget cuts, he said.

Mr Paye painted economic

prospects for the industrialised world in a rosy light, saying there would be a pick-up in Europe and Japan during the course of this year. The US was on course for stable and non-inflationary expansion, he said.

However, turbulence in the financial markets last spring and the appreciation of the mark until last summer had led to much weaker growth at the end of last year than the organisation had anticipated.

It now predicts the OECD countries as a whole will grow by 2.1 per cent this year, climbing to 2.5 per cent in 1997. This is down from its earlier forecasts of 2.6 per cent and 2.8 per cent.

The biggest revisions have been for Germany and the US. The OECD reckons the German economy will expand by a mere 0.5 per cent this year, compared with its previous prediction of 2.4 per cent. The 1996 outlook for the US has been downgraded to 2.3 from 2.7 per cent this year and 2 per cent from 2.8 per cent next year.

The forecast for US growth has also been affected by a change in the definition of GDP used by the government. The switch to "chain weights",

The ministers' meeting in Paris today and tomorrow will also discuss the issue of labour standards in world trade.

The Paris-based think-tank, which has spent two years analysing the causes of unemployment, will today publish the final report in its jobs study with detailed proposals for measures to be undertaken by each member country.

Oracle in Microsoft challenge

Oracle, the US software company, yesterday launched Network Computer Inc, a new subsidiary aimed at developing low cost computers and appliances for linking to the Internet, writes Matthew Horsman.

The new operating unit is expected to develop "dumb" terminals costing about £500, which will enable customers to access the Internet without having to use more expensive personal computers. The technology, supported by several leading manufacturers, would be an "open" platform based on a common standard.

Oracle said it expected to make the Internet as prevalent as the telephone and the television are today.

Lawrence Ellison, Oracle's chief executive, said the market for software and the Internet applications is "explosive".

He added: "The formation of Network Computer allows us to focus our resources on this dynamic segment."

The proposed dumb terminal would allow users to download operating software directly from the Internet, dispensing with the need for expensive operating systems in the terminal itself.

The launch is a direct attack on Microsoft, the US computer giant, which dominates the world's operating-system market with its MS-Dos.

Oracle plans to develop an industry standard for the new technology, supported by a range of computer manufacturers and telecommunications companies. Sun Microsystems, IBM and Apple Computer have all expressed support for the new platform, as have AT&T, the long-distance telephone operator, and Netscape, the Internet service provider.

IN BRIEF

Japan's April trade surplus fell to ¥321bn from ¥929bn a year earlier, the Ministry of Finance said. Exports reached ¥3.640bn, up from ¥3.470bn a year earlier, while imports rose to ¥3.3.200bn from ¥2.540bn. Japan had a ¥172bn surplus with the US on exports and ¥801bn on imports. In trade with the European Union, Japan posted a surplus of ¥92.6bn on exports and ¥469bn on imports.

UK car production rose by a seasonally adjusted 1.9 per cent in the three months to April from a year earlier, the Central Statistical Office said. Production allocated for exports rose by 4.7 per cent but home production fell by 0.8 per cent.

Mary Walz, the former global head of equity financial products at Barings, is going to an industrial tribunal to try to retrieve the £500,000 bonus she had been set to receive until the bank collapsed. Ms. Walz oversaw the arbitrage trading between derivatives exchanges in Singapore and Japan by which Nick Lee-son appeared to generate huge profits.

Argos said sales, including the impact of more new stores, rose 17 per cent in the first four and a half months of 1996 from the same year-earlier period. On a like-for-like basis, turnover rose more than 9 per cent, he added.

However, the chairman Sir Richard Lloyd cautioned that Argos's performance was heavily dependent on the last quarter of each year.

Medeva has acquired the US rights to the hay fever treatment Semprex-D from Glaxo Wellcome for £10.9m. Semprex-D is prescribed for the treatment of patients aged 12 and older. The product was first launched in June 1994.

Allied Domecq's sale of 75 per cent interest in Lyons Irish Holdings PLC to Unilever received a setback yesterday when Ireland's minister for Enterprise and Employment, Richard Bruton, asked the Irish competition authority to investigate the proposed deal. Allied said that the authority was due to report to Mr Bruton by 18 June.

Hunting sold construction businesses owned by its subsidiary Hunting Oilfield Services for £25m and bought US-based oil services company Petro-Tube for £6.9m. Hunting said the deals should enhance earnings potential in both the current and future years and would reduce gearing by 6 per cent. However, the company also warned that profits from its aviation division were unlikely to show any improvement this year because of cost over-runs on its Dash-8 contract.

LiveTV, the cable-exclusive entertainment channel, is launching new local TV stations in Liverpool and Edinburgh later this year, new local TV stations in Liverpool and Edinburgh later this year. The Mirror Group, the channel's owners, announced yesterday. Early 1997, additional channels, part of LiveTV's "City TV" network, will be launched in Newcastle, Bristol and the Black Country. Each will broadcast 30 minutes of local news per hour, supplemented by a feed from LiveTV's national service in London. Mirror Group, which owns 46 per cent of the *Independent*, said that each new station would create about 30 jobs. LiveTV is also in negotiations to roll out local affiliates in Manchester, Glasgow, East Midlands, Yorkshire and Thames Valley.

Canada firm to bid for £27.4m

for E.ON's German

Pearson may supply pay-TV channel

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Pearson, the media and information giant, is in negotiations to supply TV programming for a new channel that would broadcast matches of the Premier League, according to informed sources.

The new pay-TV channel, proposed by media companies Carlton and Mirror Group, would only go ahead if a consortium backed by Mirror and Carlton won the TV rights to Premiership football matches from 1997.

Those rights are currently held by BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster owned 40 per cent by Rupert Murdoch, which is negotiating to renew its £304m, five-year contract.

Mirror and Carlton are believed to be offering at least twice that amount in a revenue-sharing deal with the Premier League. BSkyB has radically increased its bid, and is believed to be offering a similar split with the Premier League. It has pre-emptive rights to match any competing offer, under terms that are being investigated as part of a wide-ranging inquiry by the Office of Fair Trading.

Mirror and Carlton's proposed channel, tentatively called Premier, would feature exclusive broadcasts of Premier League matches, in addition to general entertainment programming. Analysts speculated last night that they could also use their existing cable channels, Carlton Select and LiveTV, to broadcast additional games.

Pearson Television is negotiating to supply both new programming and archive material from its extensive library, which

includes the rights to programmes made by Thames Television and Grundy Worldwide, two subsidiaries. Greg Dyke, chief executive of Pearson Television, is believed to have had a central role in launching the talks.

However, Pearson will not be part of any consortium applying directly for the Premiership rights. Frank Barlow, chief executive of Pearson, confirmed to *The Independent*, "No, we will not be bidding." Mr Barlow said, "BSkyB will bid what it needs to in order to win and we won't compete against that."

Pearson and MAI, Lord Hockley's media group, looked closely at the prospects for a Premiership bid toward the end of last year. A decision not to proceed was taken at a board meeting of Pearson Television earlier this year, although a senior executive of the television subsidiary has continued to brief the board on Premiership developments.

MAI has declined to comment on whether it is still contemplating a bid with other partners. Granada had preliminary talks with Carlton about forming a consortium, but withdrew late last year. Neither Carlton nor Mirror Group would comment yesterday.

Although most ITV companies have ruled out bidding for the rights, the ITV network could bid for the highlights of League matches, currently aired on the BBC. It is believed these rights could fetch as much as £20m a year in the next contract round, up from £8m currently.

BSkyB is believed to have the inside track for the next exclusive contract, although regulators could pose obstacles. Sky is proposing a digital service that would allow all Premiership matches to be broadcast. Viewers would also be able to purchase "season's tickets" giving them access to all the games of their home team. Sky is also proposing services including viewer-selected camera angles, slow motion and other innovations made possible by digital technology.

Media, section two

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business

Seton grows fat on others' crumbs

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Seton Healthcare is one of a handful of opportunistic drugs firms that have grown up in the 1990s on the back of huge changes in the health-care industry. The company's *raison d'être* is buying unwanted brands and businesses from big groups for whom they are merely a sideline.

Last year, Seton stepped up its spending from £36m to £51m and the profits have flowed accordingly. Yesterday's results showed the underlying pre-tax total rising 52 per cent to £16.4m in the 12 months to February. That figure was struck before the £1.89m exceptional cost of sorting out last year's main acquisition, Simpla Plastics, the UK market leader in urinary incontinence bags, acquired for £20m in September. The charge wiped out Simpla's maiden profits contribution of £1.52m, but having closed the head office, cut back wholesalers' discounts and run all the business through Seton's own distribution network, margin improvements should already be coming through.

This attention to basics is part of the secret of Seton's success. But while Simpla makes prescription products, most of the group's growth has been in over-the-counter medicines, where it has expanded margins by pushing a bigger range of products through the existing marketing operation. In the past year alone it has added the Asilone range of indigestion products from Boots, as well as picking up Woodward's gripe water from London International.

OTC represents 44 per cent of sales and, despite the constant need to support brands through advertising, overall margins have broken through 20 per cent. The new £6m distribution centre completed near Oldham is operating at only two-thirds of capacity. Meanwhile, although gearing looks astronomical after the goodwill write-offs of the past few years, interest cover remains strong at over 10 times.

Many businesses have grown fat picking up the scraps from rich men's tables, but Seton's timing has been perfect, coinciding as it has with the increased concentration of the giants on prescription pharmaceuticals and the squeeze on medium-sized drug groups. There should be no let-up in the number of orphan brands around after recent drug mergers and takeovers. Equally, the prospects for the OTC market remain good, as governments and insurance companies maintain the pressure on health spending budgets, diverting people away from expensive prescription drugs to cheaper so-called self-medication remedies.

Seton's growth rate is being boosted by acquisitions. Last year's like-for-like sales growth of 12 per cent is more like 9 per cent when the last two years' purchases are excluded. As the company grows, it will have to swallow bigger businesses to maintain momentum, but last year's volume growth of 6 per cent in the existing business remains

impressive and there remains plenty more to buy. The trouble is, assuming pre-tax profits of £20.5m this year, the shares, up 3p at 508p, are up with events on a p/e of 18. Hold.

Tom Cobleigh comes piping hot

Tom Cobleigh has been something of a roller-coaster ride since coming to the market at the end of last year. The managed pub company with the saccharine motto, "unspill pubs for nice people", enjoyed a bumper first-day premium on its £10m flotation price and quickly rose to a peak of 26p. It has since fallen back to a less heady 21p.

The gyrations have been caused by a variety of complicating factors that make valuing the company difficult. In its favour, it is plainly onto an impressive formula. Large edge-of-town family pubs with a heavy emphasis on food are flavour of the month and nobody seems to create much better ones than Tom Cobleigh.

It has also benefited from enormous enthusiasm in the City for the managed pub sector and a healthy dollop of bid speculation. Set against that are understandable worries about the company's gearing and cash flow.

Seton Healthcare: at a glance

Market value: £253m, share price 508p					
Five-Year record	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Turnover (£m)	37.2	38.6	49.4	61.3	84.9
Pre-tax profits (£m)	2.84	6.10	8.45	10.8	14.5
Earnings per share (pence)*	11.7	15.1	17.6	21.1	24.4
Dividends per share (pence)	4.6	5.3	6.0	6.9	7.9
*Full diluted before exceptional items					
Operating margins (%)	15	17	18	19	20
Share price (pence)	150	200	250	300	350
Sources: Financial Times	1991	92	93	94	95

Attention to detail, the creation of a brand, an emphasis on staff training and motivation and an understanding of the psychology of eating out was clearly reflected in a 48 per cent rise in operating profits to £3.9m in the year to March. Pro forma earnings per share, assuming a full-year benefit from the £21m flotation proceeds, increased 32 per cent to 89 and a dividend of 1.6p was paid (in a full year on the market it would have been 2.7p).

Cobleigh makes 40 per cent of its sales from food and it is attracting customers at times, such as between 5 and 7 o'clock, when many people want to eat but most pubs are not serving food. Its research shows that many customers think of its sites as Tom Cobleigh first and pub second, a reflection of its success in creating a viable brand.

The group plans to spend £25m on capital expenditure this year, adding 15 pubs to its current managed portfolio of 41. That would plainly put a big dent in a balance sheet boasting net assets of £40.7m and £6.9m borrowings. Sale and leaseback deals look likely to ease gearing which should end the year at about 70 per cent.

Putting a sensible price on this mix of factors is further complicated by speculation that Cobleigh's venture capital backers, owning 50 per cent of the shares currently, will be open to

a sensible offer from a major such as Whitbread, keen to muscle in on a plainly attractive formula.

On the basis of forecast profits this year of £4m, the shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio in the low 20s.

Even for this sector that is high on fundamental grounds, but speculative from puts a floor under the shares. Hold.

Allied Carpet times it right

Allied Carpets' decision to seek a stock market listing is nicely timed. The new issues market is booming and recent retail floats such as Harvey Nichols and La Senza have proved popular.

The market is also kindly disposed to the larger specialist furnishings groups after the spectacular success of Carpetright and DFS Furniture. These companies have performed wonders by concentrating on one product in a fragmented market where most of the competition are small, privately owned concerns with limited capital to expand.

Shares in Sir Phil Harris's Carpetright have risen fourfold since they were floated on the stock market three years ago. DFS shares have doubled during the same period.

Though yet to be priced, the Allied Carpet float should prove interesting for the private investor. Born out of a London Queensway management buyout in 1991, it has 207 stores of which 172 trade under the Allied Carpets name and are aimed at mid-to-upmarket customers. Eleven more trade under the Carpetland banner which targets a lower price bracket. There are 22 General George Outlets in Ireland.

Allied has 12 per cent of the market which it claims puts it neck-and-neck with Carpetright. It aims to double that share over the next four years. The expansion is likely to come from expanding the main Allied chain. A new Carpetland format is being tested and may be rolled out.

Though this will mean taking on Sir Phil's Carpetright head to head, market share is more likely to be gained from the independents which still account for 59 per cent of the market.

Since the takeover of Carpetland in 1993, Allied Carpets has been posting impressive figures with profits rising from £202,000 to last year's £12.2m. In the six months to the end of December the company reported profits of £7.3m on sales of £10m.

The float should value the firm at around £200m and will raise £10m-£20m of new funds for expansion. With a possible rise in consumer spending backed by tax cuts, building society windfalls and the maturing of Tessa, the shares could be worth a look.

OECD learning to water down the wine with beer

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

The French do these things so much better. Jean-Claude Paye, who is stepping down as Secretary General of the OECD, held a delightful luncheon reception in Paris yesterday for journalists.

The assembled hacks were in town for the annual OECD shindig, and were treated to smoked salmon snacks and Chateau de la Muette, a charming little wine named after the Parisian chateau in which the reception was held, in the Sixteenth Arrondissement. Don Johnson, a Canadian, is due to succeed Monsieur Paye in the top slot.

One senior hack who has seen many of these functions mused yesterday that there are two types of people in the OECD: wine drinkers and beer drinkers.

The wine drinkers favour Gallic-style protection and state control of the economy; the beer drinkers prefer Anglo-Saxon free trade and deregulation.

Mr Paye, as a Frenchman, had started off at the OECD as a confirmed dirigiste wine drinker "but had added a lot of water to his wine over the years", said the hack, and could even tolerate sips of *laissez-faire* towards the end.

The City was gasping yesterday as rumours spread that Neil Collins, City editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, is in the running to succeed the deposed Michael Lawrence as chief executive of the London Stock Exchange.

Mr Collins fanned the flames, saying: "I couldn't possibly either confirm or deny this story." If he does get the job, however, he

Hundreds of City people involved in selling the Railtrack issue partied in SBC Warburg's City office last night after the highly successful day's trading. Wags asked whether the investment bankers had invited Clare Short, shadow transport secretary, to the celebrations, since she had contributed so much to the Railtrack prospectus.

The Labour Party took over three pages to explain to potential investors how it would regain control of the rail network when it came to office. The answer from an adviser last night was a curt "no. This is just for people who helped to sell the issue".

Even so, the potential market is huge. Glaxo sells £156m-worth of its Beconase anti-hay fever spray a year. Eager drugs companies can contact Professor Sutton at Kings College's Randall Institute off London's Drury Lane.

The row over the size of the debt write-offs at Railtrack got so heated at one point that one Government minister issued a semi-public threat to chairman Bob Horton - that he "wouldn't get his knighthood. This is particularly cruel since Mr Horton was removed from BP before the traditional knighthood for that job arrived.

The Railtrack float has been so successful, however, that this time we expect the coveted knighthood is in the post.

APV warns of restructuring

NIGEL COPE

APV, the food processing equipment maker which recently returned to profit after two years of re-structuring, went into reverse yesterday when it issued a profits warning.

The shares slumped by 17 per cent when the company warned shareholders that pre-experimental profits would be "significantly lower" than last year's £7.1m. The main dent to the bottom line will be additional restructuring costs which will knock at least £8m off profits.

Addressing shareholders at its annual meeting yesterday, the directors blamed the downturn on a 5 per cent reduction in its profit margin over the past year and "challenging conditions" in most of its main markets.

Although APV said it expected to make progress in the second half backed by the restructuring benefits, the shares slid 15p to 74p on the warning.

The slump is a significant set-back for the company, which had been limping towards recovery after five lean years

helped by former finance director Neil French. He was appointed in late 1994 to replace Clive Strower who departed after a profits warning and a dividend cut.

Mr French had acted to halt the slide in operating margins and funded a restructuring programme by selling seven peripheral businesses.

He axed nearly 1000 jobs and incurred exceptional charges of £32m in 1995. This caused the group to slump to a £18m loss.

Profits of £27m last year appeared to indicate the corner had been turned. But Mr French hinted then that the restructuring would have to be accelerated to offset the effects of sluggish trading conditions. Fierce competition in retailing has discouraged investment in the kind of catering equipment APV supplies.

Director Sir Charles Reece retired at yesterday's meeting. Chairman Sir Peter Cazalet is stepping down in September. He will be replaced by Mike Smith, a former BTR director.

Luminar debut puts Railtrack in shade

TOM STEVENSON

City Editor

While Railtrack took the lime-light yesterday, care and disco operator Luminar put the far larger company in the shade, moving quietly to a 28 per cent premium to its 200p placing price. The stunning performance of the shares, which had been priced in line with Luminar's sector, took management and advisers alike by surprise.

The surge in Luminar's share price on its first day of dealing confirmed the strength of the new issues market. Other new flotation to have made big profits for investors on day one have included Vanguard Medical and Harvey Nichols.

Luminar owns, develops and operates theme bars, restaurants and discos elsewhere in central, eastern and southern England. It has no presence in London, concentrating on provincial towns where it has

less competition from other entertainment facilities. In the year to February profit before tax and exceptional items increased from £2.2m to £2.9m, struck from sales of £1.54m. An exceptional charge of £1.54m was levied to cover a permanent diminution in the value of three of Luminar's older disco properties following a revaluation by the directors. Two years ago the company made £1.4m from sales of £1.4m.

Luminar said it would use the £10m proceeds from the flotation to pay off £5m of debt and fund a substantial opening programme elsewhere in the country. The focus is likely to be on the Chicago Rock Cafes rather than the company's core chain of 18 discos.

Luminar was established to acquire medium-sized discos where its financial controls could be used to boost profits. In 1990 the company set up its Chicago Rock Cafe division.

IN BRIEF

Aberdeen Trust benefited from continued improvement in stock markets around the world, a stronger dollar, and income from new funds to increase: profits 20 per cent to £3.35m in the six months to March. The company said a joint venture with Phoenix Home Life would be a significant development for its international activities and it hoped to start marketing its products in the US before the end of the current financial year. The interim dividend of 1p was a 45 per cent increase on the payout for first half 1995.

Savoy Hotel chairman Sir Ewen Ferguson told shareholders at yesterday's annual meeting that the company will have spent £60m by next summer on a programme to restore the group's hotels to "their former glory".

The group had a long way to go to achieve its potential but "next year and in the years that follow we shall have created a firm platform for continuing long-term improvement and the board looks forward with keen anticipation to the future." During the year Granada took over the Savoy's major shareholder Forte. It intends to sell the Forte stake.

Jefferson Smurfit said it had appointed Peter Webster as chairman and chief executive of Smurfit Ireland/UK. He succeeds Patrick Wright, whose appointment as president and chief operations officer of the group as a whole was announced recently.

Countryside Properties, one of the largest housebuilders in London and the South-east and a commercial property developer, announced a pre-tax profit of £1m in the six months to March against £2.3m last year. The company said, however, that the result represented a "significant turn-round from the second half of last year" when exceptional provisions sent the group into a £10.6m full-year loss. Alan Cherry, chairman, said "whilst the improvements in housing are generally modest they are continuing, with more inquiries and visits to our show homes at all our current development sites."

Theo Fennell, the luxury jewellery designer and retailer which has a concession in Harrods, is planning to float its shares on the Alternative Investment Market. Henderson Crosthwaite is the nominated adviser and broker to the issue. Richard Northcott, chairman, founded Dodge City, the DIY chain that was renamed B&Q and acquired by Kingfisher in 1981. He is currently chairman of Pet City.

SEC, the leading market-maker in traded endowment policies, saw profits more than double in the six months to March from £463,000 to £1m. Turnover also more than doubled from £1.9m to £2.45m. The group recently announced its first step in a strategy of becoming a widely based financial services group with the acquisition of IFA Network. An interim dividend of 2p (1.5p) is declared.

Phonelink, the electronic information service supplier, is launching a new service Tel-Me 3.0 this week. The new service includes Tel-Me What's New, a database of current and historic information on businesses, markets, products and people from approximately 1,000 business publications. It also offers route details of over 300 airlines, as well as up-to-the-minute seat availability, price inquiry and a booking request facility. There is a hotel booking service and a mail service. Phonelink's shares, which peaked at 434p two years ago, closed yesterday at 196p, up 7p.

COMPANY RESULTS				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
British Airways (P)	£1.12	£63m (452m)	49.4 (26.2p)	13.75p (12.40p)
Consortia Finsp (P)	78.5m (79.5m)	1.03m (2.3m)	1.1p (2.0p)</td	

It was no consolation to know that my championship lead was undiminished. I wanted to win that race pure and simple

During the build-up for the Monaco Grand Prix, I didn't make any secret of the fact that this is the one race I really want to win. The car was great from the word go. Despite not winning pole position, I knew we were still in good shape, and that feeling persisted during the first 40 laps. When you have a lead of 28 seconds with more than half of the race gone it is so tempting to think you are going to win. But each time that went through my mind I nearly hit the barrier. It was a rude reminder that at Monaco you've got to think about nothing but making it to the finish. Even the smallest mistakes on this circuit are heavily punished.

The one thing which I didn't consider was the question of reliability; it's never really been an issue at Rothmans Williams-Renault. On lap 41 it cost me the

race. The engine had an oil problem and blew up.

A warning light had come on during the previous lap. I got on the radio and asked what it was all about. They were checking it out when I was suddenly in no doubt about the cause of the problem. I had come out of the tunnel on the fastest part of the circuit and I was approaching the chicane when the engine seized and oil spewed everywhere. The only good thing I can say is that it didn't happen a few seconds earlier. The tunnel is actually a curve taken at 160mph and had the failure occurred in there, it could have been a major incident since there is absolutely nowhere to go in the event of an emergency. As it was, I was able to keep pointing in a straight line and head into the escape road at the chicane.

Having got over the minor trauma of maintaining control of the car and bringing it to a halt, I knew that was it; the race was well and truly over for me. I had to string it off as quickly as possible. My immediate feelings were that it's no good lingering over what might have been. However, I wasn't so sure I would feel the same way later in the week.

To be perfectly honest, it was no consolation to know the cause of the breakdown or that my championship lead remained effectively undiminished by the result. I wanted to win that race pure and simple. I had been enjoying every single second while I was in the lead.

I had firmly stamped my authority right from the start even though Schumacher had taken pole. Qualifying had been a bit of a disappointment because, although the car



DAMON HILL

had felt good at the start of practice, we didn't really make enough progress with the set-up to win pole position. It meant I had to think long and hard about how to handle the start because of the problems unique to Monaco.

I knew that even if I made a moderately good start and got alongside Michael then he could squeeze me out at the first corner. Past experience with Mika Hakkinen in 1994 had taught me that getting alongside is not enough. The track is too narrow and the barrier too close. A collision of sorts is almost inevitable. There was no way I could make it into the first corner in the lead unless I made an absolutely perfect start.

I think Schumacher got a bit of wheel spin and that helped me move completely ahead of the Ferrari before the first corner. To take the lead at that stage was perfect. As we rushed down to Mirabeau half-way round the first lap, I looked in my mirrors and couldn't see Schumacher. I had no idea what had happened to him and, certainly, I

was not to know that he would hit the barrier a few seconds later and put himself out before the race was barely a minute old.

I couldn't afford to spend too long thinking about any problems Michael might have. The message was clear: "While I've got an advantage, let's get going and make the most of it." To my great satisfaction, I was pulling out a good amount over Jean Alesi every lap and I wanted to build up a big enough gap in case I needed an extra pit stop.

In actual fact, our strategy was perfect. We had chosen the right time to go on to slick tyres and I was immediately able to run at a quicker pace on the circuit.

Proof of that came after I rejoined

In second place. I caught Alesi (who was still on rain tyres) and I was able to pass him on acceleration

up the hill. We ran side-by-side but he didn't do anything silly. It would have been very easy for us to tangle because I was back in the lead and Jean had yet to stop for slicks.

It was tricky after that because the track was still extremely slippery. I won't deny that I had two or three moments when I thought I was going to hit the barrier. On one occasion at Tabac corner, I got a bit sideways and I was drifting all the way towards the barrier, my foot off the throttle, just waiting for the tyres to grip.

Apart from the need to be aware of the constant hazards presented by Monaco, I feel I had everything under control. Then the warning light appeared 10 laps later. The 1996 Monaco Grand Prix was history. Now we must press on. I look forward to better luck in Spain in two weeks' time.

Fountain throws up new ideas

David Llewellyn meets the man who could improve English cricketers' fielding

accuracy when players follow the baseball precepts.

"When they are throwing, a lot of cricketers lift their back leg, which results in an immediate reduction in power," he says. "They promptly compensate for this loss of power by putting more stress on the throwing arm, and that is where all the problems start."

The throwing has to be taken in tandem with fielding, and Fountain has a surprising statistic. "There is a general rule covering fielding in this country," he explains, "which is: 'Whatever happens, get the ball in the air.' This is ostensibly to prevent the batsmen taking a second or third run. The reality is that fielders are turning to throw and launching themselves into the movement, throwing themselves completely off-balance – often they have both feet off or partially off the ground. The result is that most batsmen will take that second or third run because they know there is nothing in the throw. It is not going to be accurate and there is no power in it."

"At the moment, cricketers are throwing simply by the muscles in their arm, which accounts for the number of injuries among professional players. I have never seen so many shoulder and elbow 'niggies' in my life."

Micky Stewart, the former England manager and now Director of Coaching and Excellence at the National Cricket Association, is certainly convinced that Fountain can offer a dimension at the grass-roots level that could be of long term benefit. He wants Fountain, who plays for Enfield Spartans baseball team in north London, to be appointed as official fielding and throwing coach.

But how have so many got something so wrong for so long? Fountain, a long-time convert to baseball, explains: "Cricketers use their arms to throw, whereas baseball players use their bodies. That probably sounds silly, but there is a whole lot more power in one's entire body than there is in one's arm."

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Apart from avoiding injuries, the 25-year-old, who was on Somerset's books as a youngster, maintains there is an improvement in speed and

of the South Africans and Australians is a little fine tuning.

Fountain said: "The Australians and South Africans grow up playing cricket and baseball side by side. So the skills they learn in baseball they take to cricket, and in baseball you are taught how to throw. It is such an important part of the game. You learn from the beginning where your feet should be, the position of your head, where you should be looking, what your arm and your body should be doing. Then they get the kids to throw and throw and throw."

That much throwing can be hard on the hands, but Fountain says whenever he visits a county he encourages cricketers to add a baseball glove to their array of specialist equipment.

Fountain has paid Surrey a couple of visits. The Tauranga-based coach said: "It took a few minor tweaks and they were away. But like any skill it needs to be worked on regularly. Nottinghamshire are talking of taking him on for the season, and there is a whole lot more power in one's entire body than there is in one's arm."

"If players use baseball techniques they get to the ball quickly and then they slow down to pick it up and use their feet and body to throw. It may appear slower, but we have actually timed it in trials up at Lillehall and the ball gets there a good second before it would have under the conventional method of throwing."

Confident he may be, but Fountain admits he is not cheap, not at the moment anyway while his clientele remains limited; but when he can promise: "I will get good throwers throwing amazingly, and poor throwers throwing well. It has to be listened to. English cricket could well have been working on a coaching manual."

Their manual on throwing and fielding needs to be ripped up and thrown away," he said.

"It is the first thing kids see when they take up the game and the way I do things is far superior to the way the NCA manual tells things."

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Fountain, who has attended baseball coaching courses in the United States and who was a member of Great Britain's Olympic baseball squad which failed to qualify for the 1992 Games, insists that all that is needed in order to get English cricketers up to the standards



Julien Fountain shows his baseball-style throw yesterday

Photograph: Simon Wilkinson

Glamorgan felled by Malcolm

Round-up

With international cricket just around the corner once more, Devon Malcolm weighed in with a timely reminder of his match-winning capacity with 6 for 52, including three in four balls, to help Derbyshire to a 10-run win over Glamorgan at Cardiff.

Glamorgan's best Championship performance was backed up by a career-best 4 for 55 from Andrew Harris on a day of dramatic collapses. Derbyshire began it by subduing from 56 for 1 to 97 for 8, eventually finishing 132 all out and setting Glamorgan a target of 218.

When the Welshmen replied, Hugh Morris fell to the 10th ball of the innings without scoring and then Malcolm accounted for Adrian Dale and Mathew Maynard with successive balls. Tony Cottrell prevented the hat-trick, but Stephen James went a ball later.

Malcolm later bowled Neil Kendrick and Colin Metson with successive balls and although he was again denied a hat-trick, this time by Darren Thomas, the innings ended seven runs later.

At Bristol, Courtney Walsh took 5 for 69 to deny Somerset victory over Gloucestershire. The visitors had set off chasing 250 to win, but after Walsh had put Peter Bowler in hospital, Somerset were happy to escape with a draw, finishing on 171 for 8. Bowler was hit in the face by a ball that found its way through his visor, but he returned to the ground after treatment.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

Gloucestershire v Somerset		Somerset v Gloucestershire	
First day of four		Second day of four	
Essex v Kent		Surrey v Middlesex	
Surrey 100; Kent 200 (246) best Essex (5) by one wicket and 66 runs.		Middlesex 100; Essex 100 (246) best Kent (5) by 10 wickets.	
Surrey 100; Middlesex 100 (246) best Kent (5) by 10 wickets.		Surrey 100; Middlesex 100 (246) best Essex (5) by 10 wickets.	
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JULIEN FOUNTAIN

Cricket's coaching diamond 23

DAMON HILL

Reliability's rude reminder

Spinning out of control in a grand prix with no barriers

Spread betting is dangerous. It's official. The perils of this form of investment were starkly illustrated on Sunday by a City Index client who, during the Monaco Grand Prix, went to hell and did not come back. Having expected to win £125, he lost nearly £15,000 – and not for the first time.

Spread betting, which has become very popular with its possibilities for both big wins and big losses, is nothing like gambling with an ordinary bookmaker. When a £10 bet is placed with a bookmaker and it loses, the punter loses £10. Stake £10.

per unit on a spread and losses are multiplied by the margin by which the punter is wrong.

Under spread betting the bookmaker offers a "spread" between the second and the third 10.

They then quoted a spread on each of the leading drivers plus a spread of 0.5–1.5 points about the field (the rank outsiders).

The punter, like the driver, can choose to gamble below or above this margin. In cricket, for example, a bookmaker might offer a spread on a batsman's innings of between 40 and 45 runs. If the punter "buys" at 45 runs, say, £1 per run, and the batsman actually scores 75 runs, the punter wins £30 (75–45 x £1).

If he had chosen to "sell" at 40 runs at £1 per run, he would have lost £35 (75–40 x £1).

City Index devised a bet where the Monaco Grand Prix winner received 50 points, the second 25 and the third 10.

They then quoted a spread on each of the leading drivers plus a spread of 0.5–1.5 points about the field (the rank outsiders).

The punter, like the driver, can choose to gamble below or above this margin. In cricket, for example, a bookmaker might offer a spread on a batsman's innings of between 40 and 45 runs. If the punter "buys" at 45 runs, say, £1 per run, and the batsman actually scores 75 runs, the punter wins £30 (75–45 x £1).

If he had chosen to "sell" at 40 runs at £1 per run, he would have lost £35 (75–40 x £1).

Ian Davies on the tale of a punter who banked on Monte Carlo – and bust

Panis (a 300-1 shot) clear to rack up 50 points with a bloodless victory, with another outsider, Johnny Herbert, scoring 10 points in third place. The punter, meanwhile, haemorrhaged £14,875 (50+10-0.5 x £250).

Such a tale ought to be the hard luck story of all time. But the same punter had it all before.

In last season's First Division play-off final Reading were 2-0 up against Bolton when, with

last minute of normal time and scored a winner in the 29th minute of extra time."

Bolton went up and the punter went down – to the tune of £14,500. Reading scored 10 points, 14.5 fewer than he had forecast at £1,000 a point (14.5 x £1,000 = £14,500).

In the spread betting world of unlimited liability – where spread wagers, unlike bets with bookmakers, are enforceable under the law – such nightmare stories are rife.

Neil Greenwald, of City Index, tells a similar story from the Rugby World Cup: "We ran

a spread on the highest points total in the tournament and, after Scotland beat the Ivory Coast 89-0 early on, we set our spread at 92–95, thinking 89 would never be bettered."

"A punter agreed, selling us at 92 for £500 a point, expecting to pocket an easy £1,500 [92–95 = 3 x £500 = £1,500]. Then New Zealand and Japan served up 162 points and the punter ending up losing £35,000 [162–92 = 70 x £500 = £35,000]."

Wally Pyrah at Sporting Index knows a punter who backed Australia to make a de-

cent score against England in a test. The punter went to sleep happy enough with Australia at 72-2, but woke up four hours later to find Australia all out for 130 and himself stuck in the pavilion owing £12,500.

Spread betting on cricket is particularly dangerous but, as Pyrah points out, the peril cuts both ways. Sporting Index underestimated the number of runs Brian Lara would make in West Indies-England series and, as Lara surged to a record Test score of 375, Pyrah calculated that each Lara boundary was costing his firm £1,200.

CRICKET: Hampshire turn expectations upside down, Lancashire hold out for a draw and spin brings Essex back to earth

Eccentricity fails to save day for Reeve

JON CULLEY

reports from Edgbaston
Hampshire 274 & 276-5 dec
Warwickshire 192 & 236
(Hampshire win by 122 runs)

Warwickshire's efforts to salvage a draw from a contest in which they were running second throughout persuaded Dermot Reeve to indulge in some tactical eccentricity yesterday, but in the end nothing could deny Hampshire a win that turned expectations upside down.

When Reeve is about, dull moments are rare but his behaviour on this occasion, giving a different slant to the phrase "throwing the bat", was bizarre even by the standards of the Warwickshire captain.

Against a left-arm spinner bowling into the rough outside leg-stump, calculated use of the pads to "play" the ball is a lawful if negative ploy. It does, however, carry the risk of inadvertently giving a catch, off bat or glove, which is why the batsman takes the precaution of

holding the bat as far from danger as possible.

Reeve went a step further against Hampshire's Raj Maru as Warwickshire, declining to chase a substantial target, sought to grind out the three-point "bonus" for a draw. Not content merely to raise the bat above his head as he thrust his left pad at the ball, Reeve tossed the bat away in the direction of silly point. During 28 overs at the crease he performed this manoeuvre 15 times.

"I saw John Emburey do it some years ago against Norman Gifford after he had almost been caught off the glove," Reeve said. "The next ball he simply dropped the bat. I've seen too many batsmen out because the ball has bounced off the pad on to the bat or glove, and if you drop the bat that can't happen."

Reeve arrived with Warwickshire 111-4 and seven overs into the afternoon. As in the morning session, which began with precisely 350 needed to fashion an unlikely win, the champions had been knocked back by two early dismissals. Wasim Khan and Dominic Ostler had fallen in Winston Benjamin's opening spell. Now Nick Knight, who might have given them a chance, was bowled by Stuart Milburn, and Shaun Pollock was caught.

Reeve waited 11 overs to score a run and after his antics Raj Maru must have felt there was poetic justice in his downfall first ball after tea, ruled to have been caught behind off the left-arm seamer, Kevan James.

If not in trouble then at 173-5 with 30 overs still to go, Warwickshire certainly were when Cardigan Connor reduced them to 187-7 by removing Trevor Penney and Neil Smith in the space of three balls. Scoreboard, page 23

Patel lays down law

HENRY BLOFELD

reports from Ilford
Kent 590
Essex 306 & 218
Kent win by Innings and 66 runs

After winning their first two matches in the Championship, Essex were brought back to earth with a considerable bump by the Kent spinners, Min Patel and Carl Hooper, and the Valentine's Park pitch. However, none of them intervened for Stuart Law, who completed his fourth century in his last seven innings for Essex.

His was the second outstanding innings of the match, and although Law may never match the qualities of Hooper, who played the other, I would back him to score more runs in a comparably long Test career.

Law is a crisp, uncomplicated stroke maker who leaves as little as possible to chance. The attribute which shone through in this innings was his excellent judgement. When the ball is turning and bouncing uncertainly, the smallest error turns a good stroke into folly.

After Robinson's departure, Paul Prichard pushed forward and was caught behind; Ronnie Irani was caught in the gully for a duck and when Law was well caught off bat and pad by Trevor Ward at short leg, that was effectively that.

It was all over by lunch, Patel finishing with 6 for 97 in 37.3 overs and Hooper with 3 for 67 in 35 overs. Scoreboard, page 23

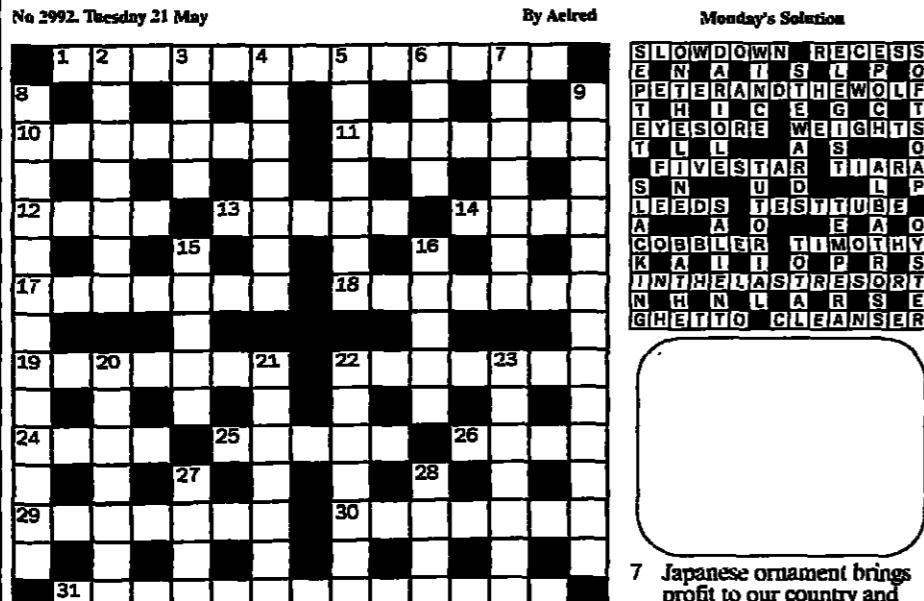


THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 2992, Tuesday 21 May

By Aleded

Monday's Solution



ACROSS

- Liable to fall flat on one's face? (8-5)
- One making choice crossly (7)
- Let's just about the others' support? (7)
- Reported to be unhappy about egoistic type? (4)
- Material to be extracted from the earth? (5)
- Perhaps diamonds are appropriate? (4)
- Ham on account and a bit of tongue? (7)
- Possible delay in, say, reversing lecherous look? (4)
- Wager about a new queen having a feast? (7)
- Awful album has to go, it's a pain? (7)
- Attack small road to get round trunk road? (4)
- A team one left by the main line? (5)
- Leftish types returned in mental agitation? (4)
- English support given to one's account of sad poetry? (7)
- Canine could be associated with this biting type? (7)
- Cringing from infestation of fleas and low living? (4-9)
- DOWN
- Conservative about wickedness of crack? (7)
- Enthusiastic about certain topics but not all? (4)
- Extremely weird estate skirting lake? (7)
- Knotted lace makes rubbly items sound? (7)
- Gross up natives of the highlands? (4)

Lancashire's England seamer Peter Martin traps Nottinghamshire's David Pennington lbw on his way to 7 for 50 at Trent Bridge yesterday
Photograph: Ross Kinnaird/Allsport

Venables keeps his players on the ball

Football

GUY HODGSON

First we have had the Christmas tree formation and a three-man defence; now Terry Venables has done away with another England tradition as firmly rooted as the square back four: no sex before matches.

Putting precedent roughly where his predecessor, Graham Taylor, shovelled Gary Lineker, the England coach will allow his players to go home to their families between matches during next month's Euro 96 rather than keep them locked away at a training base. Home cooking is just one of things he believes will keep his men happy.

"It was Terry's thinking, and that's the reason it was brought in," an FA spokeswoman, Claire Tomlinson, said. "England opened the tournament on 8 June and with them having a whole week before they play again,

"Players perform better when they are refreshed rather than cooped up in a hotel for weeks on end, and Terry felt that allowing them to go home would make sure that boredom did not set in."

Previous England squads for major tournaments have operated on the "hungry fighter" basis, and sex has been about as welcome as a first-round match against the Germans.

The players were locked away for weeks, with the traditional view being that it keeps players focused.

Sir Alf Ramsey kept a keenly puritanical eye on his men during two World Cups, and was rewarded by the ultimate success when England hosted the tournament in 1966, followed by a quarter-final place in Mexico four years later.

Bobby Robson did allow wives and girlfriends to visit the squad at the 1990 World Cup in Italy, and his successor, Graham Taylor, maintained the same

rules for the 1992 European Championship finals in Sweden.

But if Venables needed any justification for his relaxing of the rules during what could be a five-week separation for his players from their families, he need only point to the Danes. Four years ago in Sweden, conjugal visits were permitted in the Danish camp, and they ended the tournament as winners.

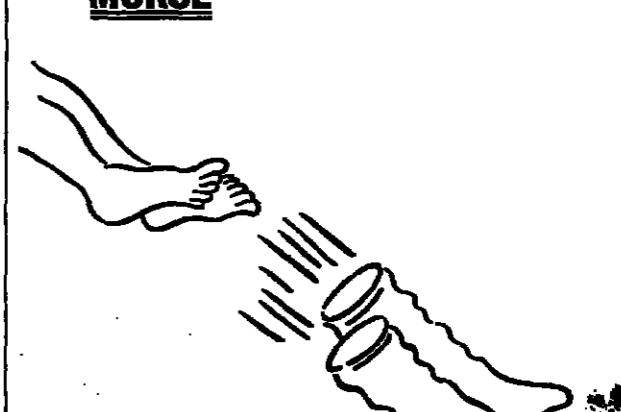
"I've nothing against letting wives into the team camp," Richard Moller Nielsen, the Danish manager, said. "Love is good for footballers as long as it is not at half-time."

Valeri Nepomniachi, the Russian coach of the Cameroon team in the 1990 World Cup, was of a similar mind in his control behind closed doors.

"Footballers are people," he said on the day women were allowed to visit his players, "and if a man is in discomfort for a long time, it can affect his work."

Rush signs for Leeds, page 22

MORSE



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